

The Nation

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EDITORIAL

PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

ASK NOT FOR WHOM

In his speech to the United Nations on December 7, Mikhail Gorbachev seized the political initiative from a dormant Reagan Administration, outlined his vision of a new world order and set the foreign policy agenda for 1989 and beyond.

Gorbachev's proposals—unilaterally cutting conventional military forces, redeploying thousands of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe in a defensive posture, converting military enterprises to meet domestic needs, placing the United Nations and its agencies at the center of a new alignment, welcoming the Palestine Liberation Organization's position vis-à-vis Israel, revising emigration rules for Soviet citizens and allowing Third World debtor nations a hundred-year moratorium on loan repayments—are all in the U.S. interest.

Gorbachev's proposals and their timing confront the community of cold war pundits, officials and other assorted experts with an unprecedented choice. Conventional skepticism—are Soviet reforms sincere?—seems increasingly displaced from reality in a world where, as Gorbachev said at the United Nations, the bell now tolls for all of us.

If the old reflexes win out again, we may lose the chance to seize reforms that are clearly in our interest. Will President-elect George Bush, for example, respond to Gorbachev's deeds by making cuts in U.S. conventional forces in Europe, thereby reducing the enormous budget deficit?

Since 1985, Gorbachev has made a series of unilateral arms control concessions, many of which have aroused considerable opposition back home. It's time that an American leader met Gorbachev halfway in trying to create a world in which diplomacy replaces military conflict. Let's not be the nyet-sayers yet again.

GORBAPHOBIA

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Massing

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WINS ONE
Mark Erlich

TO MARKET
IN POLAND
Daniel Singer

'NUCLEAR
ALLERGY'
IN SPAIN
Mariano Aguirre

WRITERS AND
SOUTH AFRICA
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JACKSON'S CHALLENGE

CREATING A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

ANDREW KOPKIND

Jesse Jackson almost got to the White House. Lunch with George Bush was laid out in the vice presidential office, next-door to the Executive Mansion, but for Jackson it was a potent symbol of legitimacy and acceptance. Bush had called him to make the date. "Lunch or a 4 o'clock meeting?" the Vice President offered. Remembering, perhaps, the first law of campaigning—never pass up a pay phone, a toilet or something to eat—Jackson chose the meal, and asked if he might bring along his children and a farmer from Iowa whose land was being foreclosed by the government. Bush laughed; he wouldn't let Jackson sandbag him with the farm crisis, but he invited his top agricultural adviser to lunch and agreed to set up a broader meeting with farmers. And the Jackson kids were invited to their own lunch with the Bush brood, just to get familiar.

It was all very jolly. Bush had his burger, Jackson the tuna sandwich. They talked about Jackson's agenda: the farm foreclosures, sanctions against South Africa, protection of Medicare and Medicaid, White House support for changes in the Civil Rights Commission, respect for the Congressional Black Caucus, plus drugs, crime and parole plans for James Earl Ray, the killer of Martin Luther King Jr. After lunch, the two men cavorted before the press like Scotties in a whiskey ad, and later both staffs pronounced themselves pleased as punch.

Dukakis always claimed Jesse was "difficult," an aide to Jackson recalled,

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LETTERS.

BUSH MOUTHS OFF

New York City

It looks as though it has fallen to my lot to settle the major issue of the 1988 presidential campaign. I have been resisting this ever since the Republican convention, but even the redoubtable William Safire, in his "On Language" column in *The New York Times*, has failed us dismally. Or perhaps *The Times* couldn't bring itself to break the story.

I doubt if the preppie Bush knows what he's been saying all these months, but I would be curious to know the background of the speechwriter who gave it to him.

You see, I grew up in the South Bronx about a thousand years ago, and the phrase was, unfortunately, only too common there. When someone really wanted to put you down in those days, he would—uh—pass wind and say contemptuously, "Read my lips."

I feel confident that *The Nation* is the true publication of record and will not let this bit of political arcana slip through the cracks of history.

Stan Lee

NO BOLL WEEVIL

Chico, Calif.

Enjoyed your several election reflections ["First Thoughts," Nov. 28] and would like to add my own. I think I know what Jefferson Morley is getting at—the anachronistic appearance of integration as a goal—but if he recommends a public repudiation, say a platform revision, I submit that the risk of opening a fissure into which affirmative action might fall, breaking faith with black America, is not worth the gain. Admittedly, the rewarding of Strom Thurmond's prodigy with the chairmanship of the Republican Party for knife-work well done means we can expect more of the same in 1992. But I don't think we should give in to this, no matter how eagerly the Ben Wattenbergs and George Wills urge us to. It's similar to the ridicule and marking down Jesse Jackson had to endure from the foreign policy "experts" for daring to regard Third World peoples as if their humanity qualified them for equal consideration. Aren't there still some things we hold simply because they're right and true? You know, an interesting phenomenon occurred in this election even with the inept Dukakis as its agent. Electorally, North, Midwest and West seemed very homologous. Let Bavaria go what way it pleases. In some ways it's the natural constituency of conservatism. When they're ready to disengage from racial and nationalistic chauvinism for a healthier populism and peace we'll welcome them back. Speaking for myself, I'd sooner vote for a Libertarian than a Southern Democrat.

Eric Lund

THIS AIN'T NO PARTY

New York City

The *Nation* editorial "End the Nightmare" [Nov. 14] is like the Archbishop's silly lament in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part II*: "Past and to come seems best, things present, worst." *The Nation* complains of Dukakis's refusal "to honor . . . the extraordinary liberal tradition from which he sprang." Really? Such as Roosevelt's putting 135,000 Japanese-Americans into concentration camps? Or Truman's anticommunist subversive lists and loyalty oaths? Or Kennedy's illegal wiretapping of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? Or Johnson's slaughter in Indochina? Or Carter's backing the Shah's torture regime?

The Nation denounces Reagan and Bush. "We expect that *Nation* readers will want to cast their votes . . . against this national blight." It claims Dukakis could "provide the margin of hope and even survival for the victims of Republican neglect or hostility." But your list of victims omits the Palestinians—because *your* national blight is for their murderers. *The Nation* expects (read: hopes) its readers will vote for an accessory to murder.

But it then breaks all records for fantasy when *The Nation* gets to Jessifying about the future. His 1988 candidacy was "remarkable" only in his open turn to the right. In 1984 he campaigned with F.M.L.N. guerrillas; he called for a 20 percent cut in the "defense" budget. This year no guerrillas and no cut in the Pentagon billions. Indeed, he said he would spend \$1 billion on Star Wars research. And he declared he would not meet with Yasir Arafat. He said he would put Johnson's portrait in the oval office. Can *The Nation* look its readers in the eye and say this rightward moving populist demagogue is going to change his party?

Given *The Nation's* previous avowed endorsements of the criminals Carter and Mondale, its current mumbled "we expect" for the woeful Dukakis might be misinterpreted as a step forward. But the magazine's potted party history of extraordinary liberalism and its pipe dreams about the Christian redeemer who will—no doubt—save us all in 1992, tell us the opposite. The editorial is proof of a great truth: liberalism is a bankrupt ideology whose time has come—and gone.

Lenni Brenner

UNION WARS

Washington

At five years, the National Writers Union does indeed have a record of accomplishment that is a matter of pride for all of us who participated in its creation and organization. Robert Claiborne records many of those successes in his September 19 *Nation* piece, "Settling in for the Long Haul." Those of us who led the union for its first four

years (plus another year in the pre-union organizing stage) find it difficult, however, to recognize ourselves in Claiborne's portrayal of chaos, improvisation and organizational naïveté in those early years.

Why did *The Nation* assign an article on the N.W.U.'s internal controversies to a fervent participant in the battles? That mistake made, didn't the editors notice the blatant partisanship of the piece once it was delivered—all puff for the new, glorious leadership, all brickbats for the Old Guard?

In fact, Claiborne makes no pretense that any firsthand reporting went into the piece; he interviewed none of us, or anyone else who might be expected to differ with his idiosyncratic interpretation of the union's early years. And that is unfortunate. He has got some of the basic facts wrong, perhaps because he wasn't a delegate at the union's founding convention. The 1983 event was in Brooklyn, not Princeton, New Jersey. The union had a healthy 1,000 members, according to internal N.W.U. documents, not 300, as Claiborne imagines (and thirty, not twenty, official delegates, plus dozens of alternates and observers from ten cities). More important, the union leadership had already successfully negotiated its first contract, with *Mother Jones*.

Claiborne aims his most ungracious criticism at Andrea Eagan, our first president—a charismatic speaker, he allows, but unable to translate ideas into organizational reality. In fact, the union's early leadership not only elaborated the organizational procedures still used by the union but also presided over the winning of all but one of the union's contracts and agreements with publishers. By the time Eagan left office in mid-1987, membership had grown to 2,234, according to a recent secretary treasurer's report. Current membership is 2,600.

It is not our purpose to compare our achievements with those of the present leaders. We wish them well. The union has continued to grow in membership, and the union remains a strong collective voice for the redress of writers' grievances. But the internal disagreements of the past several years, which led to Eagan's defeat a year ago, cannot be so easily dismissed, as Claiborne does, as personality conflicts involving Eagan's "style" of leadership.

The real issues of the 1987 election remain. They involve the basic direction of the union. We believe the N.W.U. should focus its energies on its original constituency of book writers and freelance journalists; we advocate a recruitment strategy to solidify the union's place in the publishing mainstream. Several years ago, we and other union book writers elaborated the union's planned campaign to win improvements in book contracts; but the supporters of the current

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EDITORIALS.

It's a Gusher!

Texas oil: President-elect George Bush.

Texas oil: Secretary of State-designate James Baker 3d.

Texas oil: Secretary of Commerce-designate Robert Mossbacher Sr.

Texas oil: Speaker of the House Jim Wright.

They have never had control like this, and their grip will be even tighter if Bush appoints yet another Texas businessman, John Tower, as his Secretary of Defense.

One of the first things the Washington Oilers are likely to do is slap an import fee of about \$7 a barrel on foreign oil, thereby automatically raising the price of domestic crude by that much, which will push it over the \$20 level and make Texas as arrogantly rich as it was when its cars sported bumper stickers reading, "Freeze a Yankee." For years, the

pols from the oil states have been saying out loud that they want this tariff. That's what Bush meant in 1986, before his trip to the Middle East, when he said that the oil price slide shouldn't go unchecked.

What now could go unchecked, however, is offshore drilling in California and oil exploration on Federal lands in Alaska and the lower forty-eight. Environmentalists have been putting up a strong fight, and George Bush says he is an environmentalist. But he was an oil man long before his campaign conversion to love of harbors.

When Bush's tennis-playing buddy Baker joined the Reagan Administration, his financial disclosure statement showed family holdings in Exxon, Mobil, Atlantic Richfield, Standard Oil of California, Standard Oil of Indiana and Kerr-McGee. Given these predilections, it would hardly be surprising if a Baker State Department reverted to the old days when international oil set foreign policy in the Middle East.

The last time we had anything like such a concentration of oil men in Washington was during the Johnson Administration, but at least some of them—including L.B.J. himself at times—had some feeling for people, which resulted in the Great Society programs. Bush and his Texas friends are likely to tap a different reservoir.

Bush Says 'Shush'

President-elect George Bush parades as a moderate these days, but his position on secrecy in government is anything but. During the campaign, the former Director of Central Intelligence told the American Society of Newspaper Editors that "within the limits of national security, government should be open." But, he cautioned, that doesn't mean that "every staff member will be authorized to serve as an administrative spokesman or interpreter of events and policies."

Bush thus pledges to continue the closemouthed policies of the Reagan Administration, which even in its waning days is doing its bit to keep pesky government workers from speaking out. Last month, the President vetoed a bill that would have protected whistleblowers. And in the wake of a court ruling that the President has "sovereign" powers over national security information [see Pell and Mackenzie, "Reagan Rex," *The Nation*, July 2/9], the Administration has reinstated a secrecy program aimed at silencing and censoring more than 2 million government workers and contractors.

The President's Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) is circulating a revised agreement obligating Federal employees not to disclose classified information on pain of civil and criminal penalties. The agreement encourages prepublication review of all writings and allows for court orders to stop publication of allegedly classified information.

Congress, afraid of being left in the dark by a secretive executive, last year voted to ban funds to implement the non-disclosure program, which began in 1983. In response to the Congressional ban, ISOO suspended the program for several months. Seven members of Congress and three unions of Federal employees put further pressure on ISOO

by filing a lawsuit claiming that the secrecy program interfered with employees' right to free speech and with their right to communicate with Congress. Most counts in the suit were dismissed last May, but the Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal by the employees' unions and members of Congress, who argue that the lower court's opinion "completely ignored Congress's constitutional role in national security and appropriations."

ISOO director Steven Garfinkel responded to the suit's dismissal with a memorandum reinstituting the non-disclosure agreements and reinforcing the Administration's view that Congress is not entitled to classified information. According to Garfinkel, "agencies provide access as necessary for Congress to perform its legislative function" under what he called the "need-to-know" requirement.

And who decides, under current law, what national security information it is necessary for Congress to know? Why, the White House does, unless the Supreme Court reverses the current trend.

ANGUS MACKENZIE
AND EVE PELL

Angus Mackenzie and Eve Pell direct the Freedom of Information Project at the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco.

Food Junk

The front cover of this month's *National Geographic* is a hologram depicting the earth as a crystal globe that shatters when viewed from a certain angle. The back cover, also a hologram, offers the golden arches of McDonald's in an advertisement reminding readers that "none of us is as good as all of us." This bromide from the late founder of McDonald's, Ray Kroc, is meant to persuade us that the hamburger people are at one with the *Geographic* people, who have devoted the December issue to the question of whether humanity can "save this fragile earth."

Unmentioned in the ad (or anywhere between the striking covers) is McDonald's annual use of more than 70 million pounds of liquid polystyrene, the petroleum product used to make its styrofoam cups and containers. Brian Lipsett of the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste says polystyrene is the fifth largest source of toxic waste produced in the United States. It is not biodegradable and cannot be burned without releasing poisonous gases. If buried, it can leach chemicals into soil, water and ultimately the food chain, where it can be metabolized into carcinogens once inside the human body. Lipsett maintains that each year McDonald's is responsible for 1.7 billion cubic feet of non-biodegradable styrofoam that cannot be safely disposed of, and that the volume is growing steadily.

For all its three-dimensional advertising, McDonald's does not seem to feel that the earth, too, deserves a break today.

NICHOLAS HENTOFF

Nicholas Hentoff is a freelance writer living in Phoenix.

Jackson

(Continued From Front Cover)

"but Dukakis never called him. Bush called and the two got along just fine." It's probably true that Bush thought he might co-opt Jackson and his supporters simply by socializing with him, or that he could use Jackson to play Democratic factions against one another. But on balance Jackson gained more than he could have lost by lunching. The meeting (which was held a few days before an icy date between Bush and Dukakis) helped Jackson establish himself as the leader of the Democratic Party, at least in its extraparliamentary mode, and as the recognized spokesman for the progressive constituency that he mobilized—and which the Dukakis campaign briefly wooed and soon betrayed. Jackson was also able to show he is not flagging in what seems a permanent campaign to reshape the party and, not incidentally, assert his command of it.

The tension between the man and the movement he heads still forms the central contradiction of the Jackson project, but Jackson seems so far to have avoided the paralyzing battles over the nature of leadership that have afflicted both black and left politics for decades. At least no one is now claiming, as many once did, that Jackson has no "follow-through" in his political swing. Not since William Jennings Bryan has a losing presidential candidate stayed so active and so visible after defeat, and Jackson was not even a final candidate. Other politicians who built quasi-social movements as the bases of their campaigns abdicated leadership as soon as the votes were counted. Eugene McCarthy seemed to give up even before the Democratic convention in 1968, although he was leading in delegates. George McGovern remained available for presidential politics but disdainful of grass-roots involvement after the debacle of 1972.

Jackson has kept up a murderous pace of speaking and rallying and back-room politicking. He's been in Iowa (site of the first 1992 caucuses) with the farmers, New York with the homeless, Chicago in the thick of the upcoming mayoral race. He spoke in a synagogue on the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, baptized Mike Tyson and would have met Gorbachev had there been no Caucasus earthquake. The press alternately neglects and rediscovers him. Few reporters, if any, follow his peregrinations to the hinterland, the rallies, marches and pep talks. Grass-roots organizing is not "happening" in mainstream media consciousness.

But when Jackson interacts with the political elites, the media awakens. "The Jackson Problem," bannered *Time* earlier this month over a story that tried to explain why the Democrats can't win with Jackson, or live without him. Meanwhile, the Baltimore *Sun* reported that "some of the hand-wringing Democrats may be wondering whether there is some way" to revive the "white primary"—the electoral device that effectively disenfranchised blacks in the South for a century. The "problem" now, of course, is that blacks vote for Jackson instead of a Southern white who could presumably appeal to the racist vote in the general election.

Jackson has intervened in the fight over the future of the

Democratic Party insofar as it relates to the issues of race and ideology, but he remains an outsider who can threaten rather than bargain for a piece of political power. Since the election, the struggle has centered on the party chairmanship. The first target was Paul Kirk, who spent much of the past four years destroying the independence of the various progressive caucuses within the party—and organizing against Jackson. When he resigned, Jackson moved to support the candidacy of Ron Brown, who was Kirk's former deputy (and one-time aide to Ted Kennedy) and who had come over to the Jackson campaign in its last months.

"Brown has been a spear-carrier for the Democrats for so long that no one realized that he was a black man," one Rainbow Coalition activist said. Suddenly he was a pariah. "Many of the same white liberals like Ted Kennedy, Bill Bradley and Chris Dodd, who praised me for finally signing on with Jesse last May because they said I would be a calm, stabilizing presence, have been completely silent," Brown noted at one point. Jackson rushed to his defense, charging that the Democrats were trying to "Horton-ize" Brown, not merely "Jesse-ize" him. If such attitudes persist, Jackson warned, he would consider withdrawal from the Democratic Party. Then he added, "Maybe they'll get the point before they blow another one." Maybe so. Ted Kennedy endorsed Brown on December 7.

The Jackson faction is not about to take over the party, at least not in the foreseeable future. But there is an argument to be made for sharing power, which is what Rainbow politicians have been seeking ever since the primary season. Contrary to conventional wisdom, progressives and liberals made a major comeback in the campaign year, even if they missed the brass ring. Elections are only partly about winning office. They also serve to develop and focus political consciousness by the interplay of forces "on the ground." The prominence of the constituencies and the agenda that Jackson and his coalition partners inserted in the campaign pushed the political center of gravity (if not the hyperbolic rhetoric) in their direction. Bush ended up much closer to the center and Dukakis, in his final days, was working the Jackson side of the street. The selection of George Mitchell to lead the Senate Democrats reflects that shift.

A change of fewer than 600,000 votes in a few "liberal" states would have put Dukakis over the top in November. The Democrats' growing strength in the biggest cities and in many of the biggest states suggests that the progressive coalition could provide the key to springing the Republican electoral lock in the future. And it's also clear that the strategy followed by Kirk, Dukakis and the Democratic Leadership Conference, which sought to have the Democrats become kinder, gentler Republicans and thus bring suburbanites, conservative whites and Southern racists into the Democratic column, will always fail.

Jackson's job for the next four years is to create the new

COMING NEXT WEEK
The St. Nicholas Scandal

Democratic majority he believes exists somewhere out there in America. Of crucial importance will be the relationship he fashions with the disparate partisans of the Rainbow constituencies. The "common ground" he always mentions is devilishly difficult to find. Many left activists in the Rainbow Coalition want to build a permanent, independent organization with a hyperdemocratic structure—a membership movement that is also a political party. They will demand—and they deserve—accountability from Jackson for his base on

matters of principle and policy. Most black politicians who have benefited from the Jackson campaigns so far want a more modest model, and probably less democracy. They fear the marginalizing consequences of independence. Jackson will have to accommodate both tendencies, and others, to keep the coalition viable. At the same time, he must find ways to break through the racial and ideological barriers to the creation of a majority. He has miles to go, and a lot of tuna sandwiches, before that will happen.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

"Wake up, George," the figure standing in the shadows said. "It's time we had a little chat."

George stirred. "It would be kinder and gentler to let me sleep for a while," he said, "and a kinder and gentler America is what I'd like to see."

"Wake up, George," the visitor persisted.

George opened one eye. "It can't be the radio alarm clock," he said out loud. "Because my radio alarm is permanently set on a country music station—anybody who thinks I'm not a regular guy can check that out—and that voice is not a country voice."

"Good for you, George," the visitor said, in a voice that was indeed a voice that could only belong to an Easterner of the landed class. The words barely escaped from jaws that were almost clenched shut, as if the speaker were feeling the effects of having eaten his way through a case of Skippy Super Chunk. "Marvelous. You're absolutely right. This is not one of your hayseed friends."

George sat up in bed. "Who are you?" he demanded. "What are you doing here?"

"But surely you remember, George," the visitor said. "We made a little arrangement. You said you'd sell your very soul to win, I said that could be arranged, we shook on it, and that was that. A handshake between gentlemen."

"But I didn't make that deal with you," George said. "I made it with Roger Ailes, my media adviser. You don't look like Roger Ailes."

"You must know, George, that I can appear in any form I choose to appear in," the visitor said. "And, not to be snobbish about it, the form of Roger Ailes is not actually one of my favorites."

George reached over for his glasses. He tried to focus on the visitor, who was still standing in the shadows, almost enfolded in the heavy bedroom drapes. "But you look familiar," George said to the visitor. "Where'd you prep?"

"You're getting warm, George."

George stared at the visitor. Then he said, tentatively, "Coach Watson?"

"An old enemy of mine," the visitor said. "I took his face this evening as a little joke."

"Coach Watson is the one who taught me that when the Great Scorekeeper comes around he doesn't ask who won or lost but how they played the game," George said. "Coach



Watson told me that winning a game was worthless if you had to stick your thumb in a man's eye to do it."

"I don't know why people persist in saying that you've gone through life remembering names and forgetting lessons," the visitor said. "Those were precisely Watson's lessons—the old fool."

"But Roger said I was just doing what I had to do," George said.

"They didn't bring you up to do what you had to do, George," the visitor said. "They brought you up to do what you were supposed to do."

Suddenly, George felt very cold. He pulled the covers up over his shoulders, wrapping himself in them as he had learned to do with the flag. "Listen," he said, "I could have won anyway. I didn't need Willie Horton or the A.C.L.U. thing. We had peace and prosperity on our side. We had the South."

"Watson could have won the Exeter game anyway," the visitor said. "But when I presented him with the opportunity to distract the Exeter quarterback with a young lady of my acquaintance, just to be on the safe side, he threw me out of his office."

George was silent for a while. Finally he said, "I don't know how to ask this exactly, but you don't have any plans to—you know—well, call in the bet right away, do you? If you know what I mean." He wrapped the blankets more tightly around his shoulders, but a shiver went through him.

"Are you kidding?" the visitor said. "Considering the airhead who'd succeed you if I did! Listen, I may change forms all the time, but I've got to live in this country."

Suddenly, George heard another voice—singing. "I ain't bowlin' in your bowlin' league no more," the voice sang,

You bowled a strike when it came to me
But now we're split and I can see
You used me as a spare, though it wasn't really fair.
Then you told me as you left me at the door
That I ain't bowlin' in your bowlin' league no more.

The clock alarm! "Country music," George muttered as he opened his eyes. "See, I told you it's set to country music." He looked toward the drapes. The visitor seemed to be fading.

"It was all a dream," George said.

"For you maybe," the visitor said, in a voice growing fainter. "The rest of us are going to have to live through it."

De Profundis

EDWARD SOREL

CARY GRANT
IS DEAD



FRED ASTAIRE
IS DEAD



WILLIAM POWELL
IS DEAD



GARY COOPER
IS DEAD



MELVYN DOUGLAS
IS DEAD



LESLIE HOWARD
IS DEAD



SPENCER TRACY
IS DEAD



AND DON AMECHE IS
MAKING A COMEBACK!



SOME
CHRISTMAS!!



MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Sipping green tea with the Khyber Rifles, walking through the Nasir Bagh refugee camp and gazing out toward the Jamrud Fort and the mouth of the pass, I made a silent atonement for my military and colonial forebears. The Peshawar district is still dotted with the grave markers of the British, who finally gave up the hopeless attempt to subdue the Afghan and the Pushtun people. On quitting altogether in 1947, they made a present to Pakistan of 40,000 square miles of Afghanistan, dividing the Pushtuns and providing an unfailing source of ill will and border squabbling.

Woe to the foreigner who attempts to settle this question by force. Kipling's marvelous poem "Arithmetic on the Frontier" ruefully admitted defeat at the hands of a tougher people:

A scrimmage in a Border Station—
A canter down some dark defile—
Two thousand pounds of education
Drops to a ten-rupee *jezail* . . .

And, even more ruefully:

Strike hard who cares—shoot straight who can—
The odds are on the cheaper man.

Expressing the usual distaste of the imperialist for the "savage," he wrote later, in "The Young British Soldier":

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come out to cut up your remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.

Mulling over these and other lessons in 1921, a Bolshevik military strategist, Lieut. Gen. Andrei Yevgen-Yevich Snegarev, wrote a book titled *Afghanistan*. Snegarev was the head of the Oriental Faculty at the General Staff Academy, and his book was published by the Higher Military Editorial Soviet. It had a plain, direct message. On no account should the Red Army ever involve itself in Afghan affairs. In Kiplingesque tones he spelled out the problem:

The place is both worthless and exceedingly dangerous, it has no resources to speak of and is inhabited by an uncultured, half-savage but ferocious and warlike population which, though lacking in all elementary discipline, will unite in the name of Islam against the outsider.

General Snegarev perished in Stalin's lunatic purge of the officers around Marshal Tukhachevsky in 1937. The Soviet Union has now paid the full price for the criminal folly of Brezhnev and Suslov, who also silenced those who were prepared to learn from history. The measure of the Soviet defeat can be seen in the Thieves' Bazaar in Peshawar, where Soviet-made goods and weapons are freely on sale, lying in looted heaps among the hashish sellers with their scales. And so the interesting question now becomes, What kind of Afghanistan will succeed the occupation?

The C.I.A. and the Directorate for Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (I.S.I.), which between them embody the sur-

viving core of the vanished Zia's tyranny, have a clear answer to that question. It was put brutally by General Zia himself in an interview given just before his death, to Selig Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:

We have earned the right to have a very friendly regime in Kabul. We won't permit it to be like it was before, with Indian and Soviet influence there and claims on our territory. It will be a real Islamic state, part of a pan-Islamic revival that will one day win over the Moslems in the Soviet Union, you will see.

In practice, this policy translates into all-out C.I.A. and I.S.I. support for Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizbe Islami, a force of Sunni Moslem fanatics that refuses the least compromise not only with indigenous Afghan Communists but, perhaps more significantly, with the monarchist and nationalist forces of former King Zahir Shah as well. Zahir Shah has always opposed the idea of a "Greater Pakistan," so the self-interest of Islamabad in supporting his sworn enemies is very clear. In a taste of possible things to come, Hekmatyar's forces recently murdered Sayd Majrouh, head of the Afghan Information Center in Peshawar, for his willingness to discuss a broad-based government. The Shia minority among the Afghans is also in fear of Hizbe Islami, with its monopoly of U.S.-supplied weapons and money.

There is no way of knowing how popular Hekmatyar is among the 2 million to 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. He is certainly not liked by the average Pakistani, who identifies him with Zia's forces and with the likelihood of a protracted civil war across the border and a consequent delay in the refugees' return. Benazir Bhutto's party did unexpectedly well in the North-West Frontier Province as a result, though it remains to be seen whether or not the incoming Bhutto government will be able to command and control the military and security apparatus that strove so long and hard against Pakistani democracy. Benazir Bhutto's stated position favors the U.N.-sponsored Geneva accords.

What of the United States? If it persists in underwriting Afghan fundamentalism and Pakistani expansionism, it risks slowing or even stopping the announced Soviet withdrawal. It identifies itself with the I.S.I. "state within the state" in a newly democratic Pakistan. And by threatening to create a chaotic and hostile Afghanistan on the Soviet border, it strengthens those in Moscow who warn of dire consequences if the imperial hand is relaxed anywhere from Estonia to Azerbaijan. In other words, it maximizes the negative rather than the positive aspects of the Soviet retreat. There seems little doubt that this is the official intention.

The decision to continue support for Hekmatyar was taken by the Reaganites after Gorbachev's offer of a phased but definite pullout made on February 8 of this year. The ambition, perhaps prompted by some half-conscious guilty memory of the humiliations of Saigon, seems to be to convert a Soviet concession into a rout. Arithmetic on this frontier says that this is a highly unwise idea.

ARTICLES.

■ MOVING THE GOALPOSTS

Gorbaphobes in
The U.S. Media

MICHAEL MASSING

When Mikhail Gorbachev announced plans for dramatic cuts in Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, most analysts applauded. For years, they had demanded that Moscow reduce its presence in Europe and now Gorbachev had complied, drawing praise from Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Not everyone was pleased, however. On ABC's *Nightline*, Henry Kissinger called Gorbachev's December 7 words at the United Nations propaganda. The next day, George Will, in his syndicated column, saw the announcement as a crafty means of maintaining Soviet superiority. "A combination of audacity and mendacity" is how William Safire put it. If Gorbachev were really sincere, wrote Safire, he could show it by "tearing down the Berlin Wall."

Gorbachev's rise has created a serious dilemma for die-hard cold warriors, who over the years have loudly declared Soviet totalitarianism to be immutable. To admit that Gorbachev has made a difference would mean renouncing everything they've stood for. Instead, eager to pronounce *glasnost* a sham, these Gorbaphobes have devised a fail-safe system to prove the point and vindicate themselves. It consists of constantly upping their demands for change to remain one step ahead of Soviet policy. To use a football term, the goalposts of *glasnost* are forever being moved.

An example from the field of culture shows how the game is played. For years, Sovietologists cited Moscow's banning of great literary works as proof of the regime's intellectual bankruptcy. No volume received more attention than Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. Moscow's refusal to publish this classic was said to exemplify the godless nature of Soviet Communism. Well, last year the novel was finally cleared for publication. The reaction among Gorbaphobes? "Dr. Zhivago' will finally be published," George Will sniffed in his newspaper column, "but the regime quickly squelched rumors that it would permit publication of Solzhenitsyn's 'Cancer Ward.'" For Will, this was proof of the regime's "unbridled capriciousness."

Here is David Satter, a former Moscow correspondent for the London *Financial Times*, explaining "Why Glasnost Can't Work" in *The New Republic*:

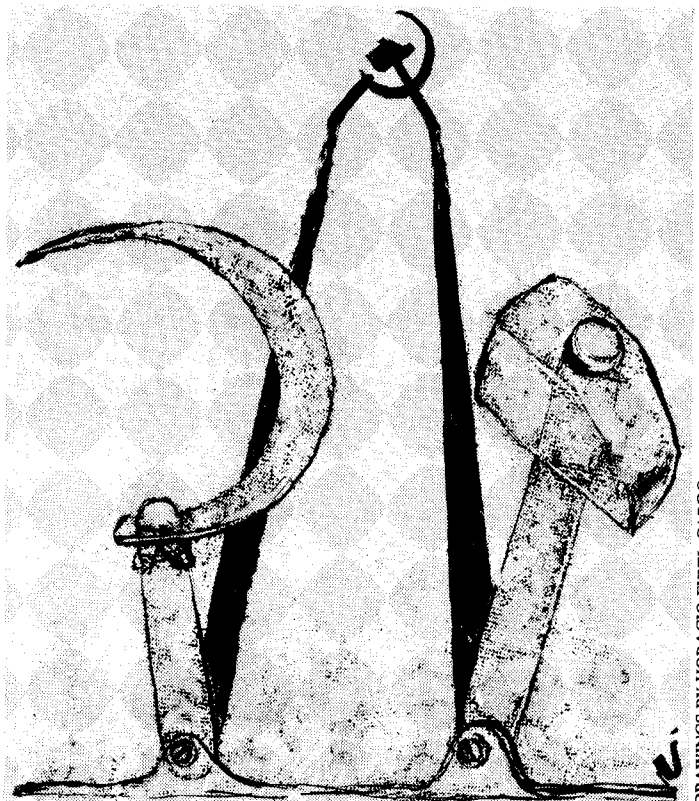
Almost all of the suppressed classics of Soviet literature are now being published, including the works of Platonov, Zamyatin, Pasternak, and Bulgakov. The censorship that

weighed so heavily in literature has been lifted. Nonetheless, political writing remains controlled on the same lines as journalism, and so imaginative literature is deprived of its intellectual context. Artistic works are often the subject of deliberately misleading criticism.

True, wrote Satter, the Russians were publishing Orwell's *1984*, but only with an introduction maintaining that "the novel is about fascism."

The anti-Soviet hard hats use a similar technique to explain away the release of political prisoners. Take the case of Andrei Sakharov. During his long years of exile in Gorki, Sakharov's plight was cited as clear evidence of Soviet perfidy. As long as this eminent scientist was persecuted, we were told, it was impossible to deal with Moscow. Finally, in late 1986, Sakharov was allowed to return to Moscow and resume his normal activities. The reaction? Sakharov's new freedom "changes little," Dimitri Simes, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote in *Foreign Affairs*. "Taking into account Sakharov's poor health and his well-known distrust of doctors in Gorki, it was only prudent for Gorbachev to take measures so that the Kremlin would not be blamed for Sakharov's de facto murder." The headline atop a syndicated George Will column was even more to the point: "Sakharov's Release: It's Just Business as Usual."

On the ideological front, Gorbachev has taken aim at many Marxist-Leninist orthodoxies, but never fast enough, it seems, to please the hard-liners. Thus, when the General Secretary delivered a much-awaited speech in November 1987 on the subject of Soviet history, *New York Times* columnist William Safire concluded that Gorbachev "will



DRAWINGS BY HORACIO FIDEL CARD

Michael Massing writes frequently on foreign affairs for *The Nation* and other publications.

break few Stalinist icons." Safire derided Gorbachev's "worshipful obeisances" to Lenin, his support of Stalin as the "legitimate party heir" and his "half-hearted plug" for Nikolai Bukharin, the economic pragmatist executed by Stalin.

Three months later, Bukharin was exonerated of all charges against him and Stalin was being blamed for the deaths of millions. So the Gorbachev-goaders came up with a new standard. "There seems to be no hesitation about publishing the truth of Stalin's period in power," wrote Satter in his *New Republic* article. "Historical truthfulness ends, however, in the discussion of Lenin. He remains a saint. There is no chance to connect Lenin to one-party dictatorship, the concentration camps, and subordination of justice to police terror." That very same week, *The New York Times* reported on its front page that some Soviet intellectuals had, for the first time, "openly begun to take the search for the sources of Stalin further back, to Lenin, the founder and official saint of Soviet communism, and to such spiritual forefathers as Marx and Engels." It's true that search has not yet got very far. After all, Lenin is to the Russian Revolution what George Washington is to the American Revolution, so it is no surprise that the Russians have not suddenly begun pelting him with mud.

In any case, another benchmark soon emerged. Walter Laqueur, writing in the July issue of *Commentary*, singled out Trotsky, the great heretic, as "a litmus test of glasnost." "No more than the medieval church could detect merits in the Antichrist," Laqueur asserted, "can Trotsky be conceded his virtues. Some beliefs are so deeply ingrained that any slight revision can cause an irreparable schism." Shortly after Laqueur's article appeared, Soviet officials issued pleas for the legal vindication of Trotsky, and moves are now afoot to make his works available in the Soviet Union. Who will the pundits hold out next—the Czar?

Perhaps the most imaginative case of changing the ground rules has come in *Time's* coverage of Afghanistan. At first, the magazine rejected outright any suggestion that Gorbachev's rule would change the situation there. "Everything that Gorbachev has said—and everything that can be read between the lines—suggests that his accession heralds not change but continuity in the substance of Soviet policy, particularly foreign policy," it reported in March 1985. The Red

Army's continuing presence in Afghanistan, *Time* maintained, showed that the Russians were "constantly looking for ways to enhance [their] security at the expense of others."

By the summer of 1987 the Kremlin was signaling its intention to withdraw from Afghanistan, and to underline the message it pulled out 6,000 troops. *Time* was not impressed, dismissing this "highly publicized" move as an "ill-disguised sham." Yes, the Russians might withdraw, *Time* stated, but now the "crucial test" was "whether they will permit a new government not under Moscow's thumb."

Earlier this year, the Russians began moving out in earnest, and the Kabul regime seemed in danger of collapsing. *Time* now taunted the Soviet Union for its hasty retreat. "In the weeks ahead," the magazine gloated in May, "Gorbachev and his comrades must be prepared for the spectacle of their abandoned Afghan quislings hanging for their lives from the undercarriages of Hind helicopters as they lift off from the Soviet Embassy roof—or hanging dead from the lampposts in Kabul." While acknowledging that the withdrawal might represent a positive change in Soviet policy, *Time* called the move "part of a slick new Soviet diplomatic offensive." U.S. policy-makers, it stated, "are skeptical as they look for further evidence—an Exhibit B or C—that the Soviet Union is changing its deeds as well as its words. To date, they see plenty of signs beyond Afghanistan that the Kremlin has adopted a slicker diplomacy. But the substance is still often flimsy."

Time's grudging account exemplifies a more general hypocrisy that suffuses Gorbaphobic pronouncements on Soviet foreign affairs. Over the past two years, Moscow has been moving steadily away from a policy based on brute force and naked threat to one based on diplomacy and negotiation. Gorbachev has signed a major nuclear arms treaty with the United States and courted the leaders of Western Europe. He has negotiated with the Chinese to ease border tensions and renewed diplomatic ties with Israel after a twenty-year break. From Cambodia to Angola, Gorbachev has pushed for political settlements to long-term military conflicts. Taken together, these steps signal a dramatic break with traditional Soviet militarism—a development eagerly sought by a succession of U.S. Administrations dating back to Truman.

Far be it from the Gorbaphobes, though, to see anything positive in the change. On the contrary, they view Gorbachev's turn toward diplomacy as posing *more* of a threat to the United States, not less. Thus Safire, writing about a Soviet offer to withdraw from Vietnam's Camranh Bay in exchange for an American pullout from Subic Bay in the Philippines, declared, "These are not the ploys of a nation seriously seeking an end to tension; they are the deliberate moves of a superpower switching from raw power to diplomatic trickery to further imperialist aims. . . . Thus does the Kremlin pursue its long-term goal on the cheap; Mr. Gorbachev is making a propaganda virtue out of reducing the unsustainable percentage of his G.N.P. devoted to arms."

Richard Nixon, in his most recent book, 1999: *Victory Without War*, regards Gorbachev's penchant for diplomacy as altogether sinister.

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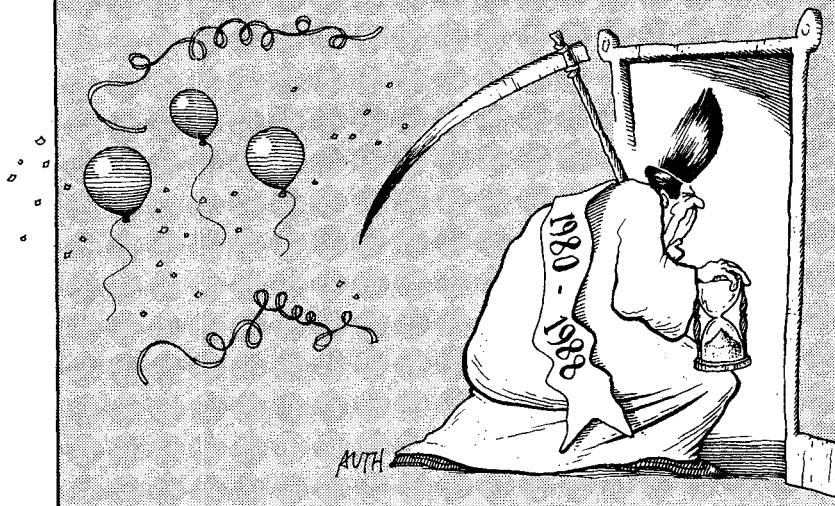
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"Goodbye Ronnie . . ."



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MD8MB2

The beginning of the Gorbachev era does not represent the end of the rivalry between the two superpowers. Rather, it represents the beginning of a dangerous, challenging new stage of the struggle. Under Gorbachev, the Soviet Union's foreign policy has been more skillful and subtle than ever. But it has been more aggressive, not less. . . . Like his predecessors, Gorbachev seeks to expand the influence and power of the Soviet Union. Regardless of the refinements he has introduced into Moscow's public-relations techniques, he has preserved the long-term objective of pushing for global predominance.

Needless to say, it's important to maintain some skepticism about events in the Soviet Union. Gorbaphoria can be as dangerous as Gorbaphobia. *Glasnost*, however refreshing, cannot hide the fact that the Soviet Union remains in many ways a cruel and oppressive system. People continue to be imprisoned for their beliefs, civil liberties are violated as a matter of course and Soviet citizens are unable to leave their country at will.

Nonetheless, to maintain that nothing has changed in Moscow—to see no difference between the use of diplomacy and the dispatching of troops—seems a singular exercise in ideological mindlessness. The right's persistent refusal to acknowledge the reality of change in Moscow shows just how obsolescent its world view has become. Nixon's book, while purporting to look toward 1999, reads as if it had been written in 1959. The right, ascendant for so long, has entered a period of intellectual arteriosclerosis.

That old prejudices die hard was illustrated a few weeks ago by Jeane Kirkpatrick. In a remarkable syndicated column at the end of October, she praised the Soviet Union for some of its recent steps toward liberalization. "These moves to relax government's iron grip on key aspects of society and culture give new meaning and importance to Mikhail Gorbachev's plans for reform," Kirkpatrick wrote. "They suggest that Gorbachev and his colleagues may be ready to abandon the efforts at total control, the distinguishing characteristic of the totalitarian state." She went on to ask: "Is it possible that we are watching now the early stages of an evolution of totalitarian states into authoritarian regimes?" With that, Kirkpatrick—champion of the great authoritarian/totalitarian divide—seemed to be calling into question her own life's work. It was a rare and refreshing moment of intellectual candor.

Alas, it didn't last long. A week later, Kirkpatrick was back at her old post, hammering away at the Russians with characteristically harsh and unrelenting language. The signals coming out of Moscow, she thundered, "all communicate the same message: the character of the regime and the right of the Communist Party to a monopoly of power are not to be questioned. The structure of power is non-negotiable." As if oblivious to what she had written the previous week, Kirkpatrick stated, "If under Gorbachev socialism remains 'irreversible' and centralization of power in the hands of a single man its characteristic structure, then there has been precious little 'new thinking' about the most basic question."

The same could be said of the American right. □

■ A GRASS-ROOTS VICTORY

Labor Rises Up To Show the Way

MARK ERLICH

For the past decade, the Associated Builders and Contractors (A.B.C.), an organization of rabidly antiunion building employers, has been on a mission to eliminate prevailing wage laws at the state and national level. When its members focused their resources on Massachusetts, however, they met their match in a highly organized army of union construction workers and other labor and community activists.

The battleground was Question 2, a referendum on the November 8 ballot that called for repeal of the state's prevailing wage law. Passed in 1914, the law requires that all building contractors pay the "prevailing wage" (i.e., the local union wage scale) on state-funded construction projects. While clearly beneficial to organized labor, the primary intent of the legislation is to protect the public interest. Nonunion as well as union contractors do build prevailing wage projects. But establishing predetermined pay rates prevents public agencies from awarding contracts to non-union firms that submit the lowest bid solely by slashing wages. The seventy-four-year-old law helps maintain quality standards in construction by encouraging a skilled work force over fly-by-night builders.

On November 8, voters soundly rejected Question 2 by a 58 to 42 percent margin. "Massachusetts politics will never be the same again," proclaimed state A.F.L.-C.I.O. president Arthur Osborn at a victory party that night. In fact, the labor movement had successfully parlayed the grass-roots activism of building trades unionists and a broad range of political endorsements into an electoral coalition that spanned the spectrum from Reagan Democrats to the Rainbow Coalition—something the state's Governor was unable to accomplish in the presidential election.

The A.B.C. has emerged as one of the more influential sponsors of the New Right's national economic and political agenda. Since unionism is not as dirty a word in Massachusetts as it has become in some parts of the country, the A.B.C. had to separate the repeal question from pure and simple union-bashing. Backers of Question 2 framed the referendum as a tax-saving measure that would introduce free-market principles into an unnecessarily regulated industry. Led by local A.B.C. spokesman Stephen Tocco, the Fair Wage Committee recruited a handful of town officials and Barbara Anderson of Citizens for Limited Taxation to serve as advocates. Tocco and Ander-

Mark Erlich is a union carpenter and author of With Our Hands: The Story of Carpenters in Massachusetts (Temple University Press). He served as a field coordinator for the Committee for Quality of Life.

son, the architect of the popular 1980 tax-cutting "Proposition 2½" referendum, filled newspaper columns and airwaves with claims that the prevailing wage law costs the state's towns and cities \$212 million a year.

Tocco and Anderson painted a picture of senior citizen centers that could not be built, of children's libraries that could not be expanded, of town lawns that could not be maintained, all because of an archaic piece of legislation that squeezed town budgets to satisfy union whims. Early polling supported the effectiveness of the A.B.C. pitch. A sample of voters in May, for example, favored repeal by a 49 to 30 percent margin.

Labor officials in Massachusetts recognized the danger of allowing the A.B.C. to define the political terrain by citing unproven tax savings. The Committee for Quality of Life, under the leadership of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s Osborn and Massachusetts Building Trades Council president Leo Purcell, developed a three-pronged strategy. First, the committee underwrote a high-profile media campaign; second, a highly visible field organization was put in place to drive the "Vote No on #2" message home; and third, a broad-based coalition was proposed to recast the conflict from taxpayers versus Big Labor to community interests versus greedy contractors.

In August the respected Data Resources Inc. released a study indicating that repeal would result in tax savings amounting to only 0.6 percent while producing wage losses of \$196 million. "The only clear result of repealing the Massachusetts prevailing wage law," concluded the report, "would be lower wages for Massachusetts residents."

The Data Resources report was the opening salvo in an educational campaign to discredit the A.B.C. propaganda. When Anderson insisted that the law "guaranteed" construction workers incomes of \$50,000 a year, the committee noted that the U.S. Labor Department figures showed the average Massachusetts construction worker's pay for 1987 was \$26,000. When Tocco told *The Boston Globe* that the law added a 20 percent surcharge to public projects, the committee pointed out that labor costs account for less than 20 percent of total construction costs—meaning that tradespeople could work for free and Tocco's numbers still would not pan out.

Opponents of repeal quickly covered the state making public appearances and giving media interviews. In mid-September the campaign produced two television commercials that mocked the A.B.C. claims of tax savings and charged that the real goal was simply increased profits for contractors. The "first strike" barrage of media activity penetrated the A.B.C. smokescreen of taxpayer advocacy. The terms of the political debate were successfully altered. The referendum became a question of workers' rights to a decent standard of living in opposition to the business community's desire for unregulated control over the workplace.

The pro-prevailing wage campaign, largely financed by \$50 individual contributions from building trades unionists, was able to outspend the opposition. But rank-and-file members had additional resources to be tapped as well. The decision to build a statewide, bottom-up electoral organization represented a new direction for organized labor. While

labor leaders have a long tradition of legislative lobbying and candidate endorsements, in recent years labor has shown only sporadic interest in full-scale membership mobilizations.

A series of regional meetings in September, attracting nearly 2,000 volunteers, created a system of town and ward committees. In some cases, established union officers took the position of town coordinator; in others, younger activists volunteered or were asked to accept the post. Local unions and central labor councils played important roles, but the geographically based committees became the building blocks of the field effort.

"At first, there was a reluctance to work across union lines," says Paul Roche, a 29-year-old electrician who spent much of the fall poring over street maps in order to design and delegate campaign responsibilities for the thirteen precincts in Boston's Ward 19. "But the barriers broke down quickly as people rallied around a cause they cared about." Titles and positions in union hierarchies assumed less importance as the committees sorted out roles and responsibilities based on willingness to work. By November, there were nearly 350 coordinators overseeing local committees ranging in size from a handful in rural communities to 200 in the larger working-class towns.

The activists' skills and backgrounds proved helpful. A vacant warehouse in South Boston was turned into a temporary sign factory. Carpenters and sign painters churned out 70,000 lawn and polling signs over a six-week period. The mobility of construction workers on widely dispersed job sites proved useful too. The campaign's blue-and-white "Vote No on #2" bumper stickers became easily the most visible slogan on the Massachusetts political landscape.

The campaign was the maiden political voyage for the vast majority of the volunteers. Nonetheless, they managed



to distribute 1.5 million pieces of literature on two separate occasions; hold signs for the public to see week after week at traffic rotaries, major intersections and town centers; and in the process become the envy of every politician in the state. More important, the effort offered a sense of empowerment to workers who had never felt comfortable engaging in political or union activity. "Until this campaign," marveled Luis Burgos, a 41-year-old member of the Operating Engineers union, "I didn't think I had the talent to talk to people about an issue I believed in."

The Committee for Quality of Life garnered the support of groups representing teachers, nurses, police, firefighters, consumers, senior citizens, tenants, women and minorities. Low-wage workers, who might have stayed on the sidelines out of resentment at higher-paid construction workers, eagerly joined the fray. One union representing service employees urged its members to note the similarities between the fight to preserve the prevailing wage and the struggle to win pay equity for women.

The core of the campaign remained clearly labor-based, but outside endorsements gave the committee legitimate grounds to speak in the name of a broader public. Not all the support came easily. In particular, some women's and minority groups were reluctant to support automatically the predominately white male building trades unions without addressing the issue of racial and gender participation in the construction industry work force.

After several months of negotiations, union leaders and the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus issued a joint statement promising to support the prevailing wage and to work together on minority concerns. And in the last week before the vote, the state's black radio stations aired an anti-repeal message recorded by Jesse Jackson. These efforts to reach out clearly paid off. A pre-election *Boston Herald* poll indicated that women opposed repeal in greater numbers than men. The election results themselves proved even more telling: Boston's four predominately black wards turned down Question 2 by an overwhelming 4-to-1 margin.

The push to the finish was marred in the final week by a bizarre controversy over a television commercial. In an effort to offset the A.B.C. portrayal of the prevailing wage law as a publicly subsidized gift to greedy construction workers, the committee filmed a spot featuring an ironworker and his family recounting the difficulties of making ends meet. Unfortunately, this particular worker owned multiple properties, a fact known and ignored by the public relations firm in charge of media productions. The A.B.C. unearthed and trumpeted this piece of information, damaging the credibility of the anti-repeal campaign, undoubtedly costing votes and infuriating thousands of construction workers who were, in fact, scraping to make ends meet.

The victory was, therefore, particularly sweet for the exhausted campaign volunteers who feared that the outcome might turn on the media blunder. November 8 was an unofficial holiday for construction workers as their unions urged them to take the day off. Poll coverage statewide was so thorough that workers at campaign headquarters taking calls from precincts across the state knew the outcome long

before the wire services and television stations.

"The margin of victory affirmed that unionism really is alive and well," reflected Bernadette Higgins, an apprentice painter who served as the Medford town coordinator. What is most interesting is the brand of unionism that the campaign reinforced. "For years, the labor movement has been a movement of leaders," says Steve Joyce, a 31-year-old carpenter (and son of a labor official) who served with Roche as a ward coordinator. "Now it's also grass-roots. This campaign shows the need for internal education, democracy, membership involvement, a spirit of inclusion and reaching out to the general public to combat the image of labor as a 'special interest.'"

The election has passed, but many of these newly mobilized workers are unlikely to return to business as usual in their unions or their communities. The challenge is for their leaders to build on the momentum. The labor movement in the United States has taken it on the chin in the past decade. The Massachusetts prevailing wage campaign of 1988 — with its emphasis on coalition-building and grass-roots mobilization — shows how to start reversing labor's decline. □

■ A JOURNEY TO POLAND—II

The Market Is The New Religion

DANIEL SINGER

Warsaw

Back in Warsaw after my trip to Gdansk, I talk about the economy with the outgoing government's spokesman on reform. He is more specific on what is to be done than on how it should be achieved. Stalinist coercion must be replaced by the direction of the economy through financial incentives. He raises the question of ownership — interesting, since private property accounts for about 7 percent of the gross national product outside agriculture, and public ownership is likely to predominate for some time to come. Yet what form will that ownership take: communal, cooperative or collective? And if collective, will it be run by the workers, by a share-owning management, by whom?

He either does not perceive the social and political consequences of the various choices or does not want to talk about them. While mocking the almost religious awe with which the market is now treated in Poland, he offers me a scoop with the utmost pride: In the government that Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski is to announce this afternoon, the Minister of Industry, Mieczyslaw Wilczek, head of a joint-venture firm with foreign capital, is a "real millionaire."

To watch the government's inauguration I proceed to the *sejm*, or diet, a big white building that stands where it did

Daniel Singer is The Nation's correspondent in Europe. This is the second installment of a two-part article.

before the war but has been modernized with a glass rotunda. It is a sort of pilgrimage for me: My father, a parliamentary commentator, exercised his wit there against Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and the colonels, whose regime is now being prettified by the nostalgic portion of the opposition. I cannot quite recall Byron's lines about giving the pugnacious Poles a diet, then telling them to keep quiet. In the elegant hall during the recess I get quite close to Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. He walks as if he has swallowed a stick; I am sure he must be wearing a corset. Next to him, recognizable by his big ears, is Jerzy Urban, the skilled journalist turned government spokesman, who appears to relish his position as the most hated man in the country. Rakowski has just finished his speech, which is considered modern and original because it lasted only thirty minutes. Its true originality lay, in fact, in the way this well-known anticleric wooed the Catholic hierarchy, quoting Jozef Cardinal Glemp and promising to provide rapidly what the church had been awaiting a long time—legal status for its property.

The new Prime Minister did mention a "historic compromise," only between party and church, not Solidarity. The line was clearly shifting. In his press conference next day, Rakowski stressed that Poles were less concerned with a roundtable than with a table laden with goods. But what Warsaw wits ironically call the "Korean solution"—military dictatorship plus a free market—is just not on. Gorbachevism is not a favorable environment for a further tightening of political screws, and foreign capital will not pour in to boost production. Does appointment of a millionaire mean Rakowski is pinning his hopes on the moneymakers?

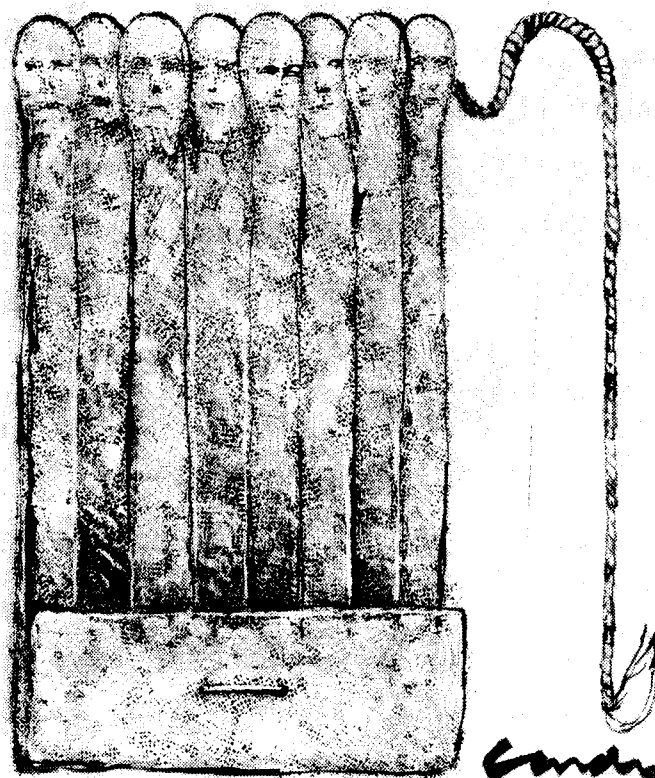
The Western contrast between rich and poor is becoming a part of Poland's social landscape. On the plane in from Frankfurt I sat next to a handsome, bejeweled Polish woman who carried her capital on her arms and neck. She was returning from South Africa, with no qualms of conscience, and intended to buy a villa in the seaside resort of Sopot and open a restaurant. One evening in Warsaw a friend wanted to take us for a drink to Gessler and Sons, the fashionable cafe in the Saxon Garden, where two giant figures in armor stand guard at the gate. Inside, there was an open-air mime show and lots of "beautiful people." We couldn't stay: It was a private party. The bowler-hatted host, I was told, hovered somewhere on the frontier between government service and shady foreign trade. Booking the place, though it must have cost a fortune, was not unusual; it was to be "closed" again the next day for a wedding party.

Although this conspicuous consumption does shock one, the new rich are still marginal. They are the most privileged section of the well off, who are estimated to be roughly 15 percent of the population. Many of these are connected in some way with the outside world because of the mad exchange rate. At the other extreme are an estimated 25 percent—old-age pensioners, low-wage earners, large families with little income—close to the subsistence level. In between, a majority who just manage to make ends meet. The economic reform, if it works, is bound to polarize society further, with unforeseeable political consequences. At this stage, however, whatever the admiration for the Iron Lady,

there is no room for a Polish version of Thatcherism—privatization, gifts for the rich, the bribing of part of the working class, all amid a spurious air of prosperity. In Poland, where production and consumption are still below the levels of ten years ago, what is needed for the reforms to have a chance is a social contract with the labor movement. This Cardinal Glemp cannot offer, whatever his good intentions and his influence on Lech Walesa. The reign of Rakowski is likely to be a continuation of the crisis.

The Beautiful Suit and Our Ugly World. Walking through Nowy Swiat I saw an advertisement at the Economists' Club for a show of Jewish humor. Though it was a premiere and invitation-only, I managed to get a table by taking advantage of my father's reputation. It was a one-man show, with the actor telling all sorts of Jewish jokes—good, bad and indifferent—not in Yiddish but in Polish with a phony Jewish accent. Yet if it all suddenly seemed sinister to me, this had nothing to do with the quality of the performance. It happened in the middle of one of my favorites, about the customer who complains to his tailor for taking a couple of weeks to finish a suit, while God took only seven days to create the world. "Look at this beautiful suit," the tailor replies, "and look at the world." This was worse than gallows humor; it was wit in a cemetery. The stories had their roots in a vanished world. We were within shouting distance of the ghetto, in a town where Jews once numbered more than 350,000. When the show was over I looked at the sixty or so people in the hall, most of them women: Here were the remnants of a tribe.

The nice young couple at our table happened not to be Jewish. The man was here because his firm was taping the show (60,000 cassettes and more to come, things Jewish



being fashionable these days). The subject of conversation was unavoidable. They had thought Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* unfair, almost racist, in lumping all Poles together, though they did not deny the present shameful Polish phenomenon of anti-Semitism without Jews. They thought it would die out together with the prewar generations, while admitting that some of their contemporaries still echoed the anti-Semitic stereotypes of their parents. Marek Edelman, the heroic and lonely survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, whom I met a couple of days later, agreed. Indeed, he thought anti-Semitism would have vanished already without official encouragement. Since he was obviously referring to such sins as the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, I asked him about the Jewish presence in the government, specifically about Jerzy Urban. "Oh no. He has achieved the feat of being hated for himself."

Let there be no misunderstanding. The Jewish question is, unfortunately, unimportant in Poland, merely a symptom. I bring it up here as a means of conveying the right-wing revival within the Polish intelligentsia. The 1981 military coup, the absence of a progressive solution, the government's determination to talk with the church and not with the labor movement, have all contributed to this swing to the right. If the French tend to look at the past through the prism of the present, the Poles allow the ghosts of the past to walk upon their political stage. Marshal Pilsudski has his followers in today's Poland; they have made him synonymous with national independence and, hence, opposition to the Soviet Union. Roman Dmowski, prewar leader of the anti-Semitic National Democracy, also enjoys support. The epigones of National Democracy (or *endecja*), less hostile to the Soviet Union and the regime, and the more conservative Catholic groups that have flirted with the government tend to define Polishness in ethnic and religious terms.

Jan Jozef Lipski, the morally strong and personally gentle literary critic, guides me through this political panorama of the opposition. He moves on to a third group, his own Polish Socialist Party, or P.P.S. "Socialism, alas, is not a very popular word because of guilt by association. The P.P.S. fares somewhat better as it is not linked with 'them.' Altogether, however, Solidarity has tended to be anarcho-syndicalist in this respect and mistrust people linked with any party. This is why some of my colleagues from the lay left chose not to follow the same path."

Lipski's colleagues don't deny it, convinced that real party politics is still to come. Of Poland's established institutions, the Communist Party represents postwar history and the imperatives of geography; the Catholic Church stands for tradition, its moral authority enhanced by the bankruptcy of the party. But who will represent the interests of private peasants? And will Solidarity again manage to speak for the bulk of the working class? How will the intelligentsia divide? At present no side can seriously measure its own strength. One acute opposition analyst thinks the regime, while it lasts, can rely on the support of 15 to 20 percent of the population, and Solidarity, at this stage, on 25 to 30 percent. The remainder, while hostile to the regime, thinks

nothing can be done about it. If a compromise is reached and gradual change becomes a tangible possibility, this silent majority could ask for everything at once.

As the economic reform begins to bite, as questions over the nature of power and property in the factories are tackled, cleavages will deepen. Solidarity will not be spared. Some of its economic experts, with Milton Friedman as their guru, may for now appear to be ascendant. But they will find it difficult to preach the virtues of political suicide to a labor union whose strongholds are in the shipyards, the steel mills and the mines. If the party had the imagination and guts to recognize Solidarity, sharp tensions would appear at once within the opposition over the degree of collaboration with the regime and the nature of economic policy. As it is, the only open divisions are those within the C.P.

Two Kinds of Commissar. In the party building at the corner of Jerusalem Avenue and New World Street, I meet a friendly high-level official in the propaganda department of the Central Committee. Offered the choice of languages, he opts for English and its handicap. He also takes me for an innocent abroad. When he says in an introductory statement that Stalin described socialism as suited for Poland like a saddle for a cow, I make the mistake of correcting him: Stalin said revolution, not socialism, and he was talking about Germany, not Poland. Yet it was not here that things went wrong. In his passionate version of recent history, which rather baffled me, everything was the handiwork of the C.P., including the Gdansk strike and the creation of Solidarity. His purpose, I understood after a time, was to brush aside my suggestion of a compromise between the two sides. The party was ready to talk to society at large, of which Solidarity was only a small fraction. And not all of Solidarity at that. The names Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik provoked his wrath; they would never sit round the conference table. And if your party decided otherwise? Never. Then, after a very long reflection: Unless they changed their position altogether.

His veto was not limited to these two intellectual advisers of Solidarity. It also applied to the union leader from Wroclaw, Wladislaw Frasyniuk, whom he accused of having promised, when strong enough, to "kick the Communists out of factories." I had never heard such a threat. In any case, I argued, who gains the upper hand on the shop floor is a question of genuine influence, not of boasting. He replied, banging the table: "It is provided in the Constitution that the P.Z.P.R. [Polish Communist Party], and only the P.Z.P.R., has the right to be present in the factories." In fact the Constitution provides for nothing of the kind. This was simply my propagandist's interpretation of the passage about the party's crucial role in the state. But I was no longer arguing; we were getting along much better. Just before leaving I asked him what, in his opinion, socialism stood for at this stage. The answer was prompt and brief: efficiency. No more controversy, so I waited until I had reached the street before muttering to myself: Only this and nothing more. . . .

While the party building is huge, if not architecturally striking, the seat of PRON, a front organization for the

regime in the vast Ujazdowskie Avenue, is very different — a small, elegant villa that presumably was once the property of a rich landowner. PRON's Secretary General, Stanislaw Ciosek, is not quite 50. He is a party Secretary who climbed the ladder as a student and youth leader, negotiated with Solidarity and more recently took part in preparations for the proposed roundtable. Flexible and known as a pragmatist, he has a quite different power of imagination from the man in the propaganda department. The question on compromise does not throw him off his stride: Socialism in its Stalinist or post-Stalinist versions has dragged us out of backwardness; let's leave it to the historians to decide whether the price paid was too high. But this social formation is now a spent force and is being reshaped throughout the region. Our pioneering task in Poland is to include the opposition in the socialist system.

Without any prompting from me, he raises the question of what socialism now means and, unfashionably, tackles the problem of equality: A few months ago, he says, I watched a TV debate on private education. A monthly fee of 25,000 zlotys per child was mentioned. I have two kids and at the time — salaries have gone up since — I was earning 82,000 zlotys as a Deputy Prime Minister. . . . The opposition has changed, we have changed and so has society. Its future shape will have to take into account that our people now refuse any form of servitude. Historians will puzzle one day over how a totalitarian system could produce such a democratic people. . . . Naturally, he tries to score some points. He argues, quite rightly, that this year's strikers were fighting against injustice and asking for dignity. But when I observe that their only concrete demand was for an independent union, Solidarity, he does not press the point. What, except for a party card, does he have in common with my die-hard from the propaganda department? The fear of unleashing uncontrollable social forces and the desire for a neat solution imposed from above. By the party.

He makes it quite plain that an immediate deal is off. ("Trade-union pluralism is acceptable. But not yet. For the moment it is too explosive.") Later, in the taxi taking my wife, Jeanne, and me to the airport, I reflect on the obstacles that lie ahead. A concrete proposal for a coalition, a joint electoral list, is attributed to Ciosek, with 60 percent of seats going to the party and 40 percent to the opposition. But nobody in Solidarity will accept this. A farce, electoral or otherwise, does not cease to be one just because you have joined it. What rules of the game can be established to give some guarantees at the top and yet allow the movement from below ultimately to shape the fate of the country?

My building of castles in Spain is sharply interrupted by Polish reality. At the airport, after the passport check, we are taken aside. Two officers pounce on our luggage. Anything printed, all notebooks and tapes, the film of the May strike in Gdansk, are taken for inspection to some mysterious higher authority. The suitcase and our bags are thoroughly examined, including the linings. Jeanne and I are taken, separately, to a cubicle for a personal search. Two men check under my cap, in my socks, beneath my shirt, inside my trousers. After a couple of hours, everything

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is returned. This would be a profitable experience if I were writing a thriller. As it is, it's a useful reminder that power is not just an abstraction.

Afterthoughts. Once airborne, the plane is less on my mind than Arthur Rimbaud's drunken boat, *le bateau ivre*. Can a ship sail into uncharted waters without a compass and without a vision of some distant horizon? Paradoxical Poland, where "Communist" leaders publicly envy Margaret Thatcher's ability to cope with the labor movement; where the scourge of the British miners parades as a defender of trade unionism; and where the supporters of Solidarity in Gdansk, prospective victims of "restructuring," applaud the Iron Lady, its apostle. A better example of the Tower of Babel would be hard to find. And yet Poland is only the extreme example of Eastern Europe's intellectual disarray. The entire region is in transition. Its rulers visibly act only by conditioned reflexes, and one-party rule is justified by nothing more than the perpetuation of power. Public ownership and some form of economic direction from above ("planning" being too big a word) are justified through the same reason, by the need of a *nomenklatura* to give jobs to the boys. For the moment, on both sides of the fence, the market is the new religion.

One emerges convinced that all these countries will have to travel further toward a market economy, and not only to clear away the mess, to rediscover some yardstick after years of miscalculation, to provide more transparence—*glasnost*—in order to see who is exploiting whom and how. The change is also needed for people to perceive the vices of our Western system as well as of their own, for Eastern Europe's social movements to find their bearings and their political expression. How long that will take and how the process must run will vary from country to country, but the conservative admirers of Solidarity may well be in for some unpleasant surprises. Even if right-wing elements sometimes give the impression of gaining the upper hand, especially in moments of defeat and retreat, the Polish labor movement still appears capable of resuming its progressive role.

One is struck in Poland by the degree of freedom of expression, not only in the spoken but in the written word, not only underground but in official publications. "Daniel, you know Poland," I was scolded by my friends in the opposition. "You ought to know that politically that's irrelevant." Disagreeing profoundly, I recalled the old story of the East German political satirist who is hounded from his own country, sets up a successful political cabaret in West Germany and remains as gloomy as ever: "There I could say nothing but it mattered; here I can say everything and it doesn't." Whether or not this was ever true in Germany, it is manifestly not the case in Poland. The problem is not just freedom of speech but how to use that freedom to drive people to action.

Let us illustrate the argument. Amid the recent Polish talk of possible collaboration, the question arose of common lists, joint commissions and a second parliamentary chamber. The latter idea was born in 1981 at the height of Solidarity and the fashion for self-government. Indeed, the second chamber was intended to be the expression at a na-

tional level of the workers' councils that were to be set up throughout the country. The first chamber, by granting political power, was supposed to recognize geopolitical realities; the second, even with limited prerogatives on economic and social issues, was to express the legitimacy of the labor movement. This institutionalization of dual power was conceived as the best framework for a "creeping revolution."

Today the situation is quite different. Workers' councils do exist, but in most cases they are a parody of self-government. It is easy, therefore, to dismiss official proposals on the ground that building a second chamber on such a false basis would simply discredit a precious idea. But what if a second house took shape in two or three years' time, after authentic workers' councils had been set up throughout the country? Let there be no illusion: Self-government *in itself* is no solution. Yet, faced with the genuine need to restructure industry, Solidarity could use the platform of self-government to tackle both the problem of property and power in the workplace and that of democratic planning on a national scale. Naturally, it is easier to stand defensively—as Solidarity's present leaders often do—on the slogans of independence and pluralism, but that is not the way to forge the future.

"Really existing socialism" is at the end of its tether. Though it is unclear what will take its place, it would be a pity if socialists failed to take part in the contest for lack of ideas. Poland can continue to play a pioneering role in this vast process of transition because, since 1970, its working class has reminded the world that in Eastern Europe too the future can be shaped from below. And the Polish labor movement is not a spent force. I ended my journey with the contrasting impression that while the immediate perspective is of a political impasse, some form of compromise is historically inevitable. Unless, that is, the present leaders, preoccupied only with their immediate survival, provoke the angry young proles into desperate action and drown all hopes in blood. □

■ SPAIN'S 'NUCLEAR ALLERGY'

The U.S. Finds A Treatment

MARIANO AGUIRRE

Madrid

On December 1, after almost three years of negotiations, the United States and Spain finally signed a new eight-year agreement on their military relationship. The two governments now believe they have overcome the obstacle that had stymied their talks for several months: the issue of U.S. nuclear weapons in Spain. But the codicil that supposedly resolves this ques-

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tion contradicts the main agreement itself.

The accord says that, in keeping with the outcome of a March 1986 referendum on NATO, Spain forbids the introduction and deployment of nuclear weapons on its soil. The codicil, however, specifies that the Spanish government will not question Washington about the kinds of weapons being carried by the ships and submarines of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, which dock at Barcelona, Rota and other ports, or by the B-52G bombers and other U.S. aircraft that overfly Spanish territory and use bases there.

Spain entered NATO in 1982; that same year the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (P.S.O.E.), led by Felipe González, came to power promising a referendum on NATO membership. Once in office, however, the P.S.O.E. abandoned its neutralism, and the referendum was delayed until González felt the Spanish public had shifted away from its anti-NATO position. In order to secure a "yes" vote when the referendum was finally held, in 1986, the government offered three concessions: a ban on the introduction and deployment of nuclear weapons; the promise of a "progressive reduction" in the U.S. presence; and a vow that Spain would not become part of NATO's integrated military structure. With these promises, the González government was responding to several deep-rooted fears. Antinuclear sentiment is strong among Spanish voters, and there is a widespread desire to avoid any military structures that remind them of the dictatorship of Generalissimo Francisco Franco. According to several polls, most voters also reject the U.S. military presence, both for historical reasons that go back to the 1898 Spanish-American War and because of Washington's support for Franco.

In the end, the electorate succumbed to government pressure and voted yes. But in the two and a half years since the referendum, the P.S.O.E. government has had trouble keeping its end of the bargain. First of all, it is not easy to belong to an organization like NATO without taking part in the full range of its military activities. At the same time, the "progressive reduction" in the U.S. presence—which many people assumed would lead to the closure of U.S. bases—has in practice meant nothing more than the transfer of seventy-two F-16 fighter-bombers and their personnel from the Torrejón de Ardoz base to a new home in Italy.

That left González's third promise: a nonnuclear Spain. U.S. aircraft and submarines carrying nuclear weapons have been stationed in Spain since the 1950s, but with the advent of democracy, the Spanish Cortes passed legislation (admittedly ambiguous) in 1977 declaring Spain a nonnuclear country. After the 1986 referendum, the government discovered that the United States, Britain and other NATO members regarded such talk as a dangerous case of "nuclear allergy."

Official U.S. and British policy is neither to confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships and aircraft, in order to keep the Soviet Union and its allies in the dark. The problem is that most of the time satellites, electronic intelligence and conventional espionage allow Moscow to know what U.S. allies do not. In 1985 the New Zealand government of Prime Minister David Lange passed a law

forbidding nuclear weapons to enter its ports and began to ask the captains of U.S. warships what kind of weapons they were carrying.

Other countries followed that modest precedent: The new Constitution of the Philippines rejects nuclear weapons at U.S. bases, and Greece has demanded the removal of U.S. bases and the nuclear weapons stored there. In the wake of these challenges, the United States decided to make an example of Spain. For two years Spanish negotiators tried to convince their U.S. counterparts that González was obliged to fulfill his referendum pledges. Finally, last January, Washington agreed to move its F-16s to Italy—where they will be closer, in any case, to U.S. nuclear weapons stored in that country and in Turkey. But the aircraft will return regularly to Spain for training exercises. "Felipe González had domestic problems with the Americans," a top German NATO official told me in July, "so we decided to move the planes a few miles to the east."

As for nuclear weapons, the United States has made it clear that it insists on unrestricted access for its ships and aircraft, no matter what kind of weapons they are carrying. At the same time, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has urged Spain to accept official NATO nuclear strategy. This in the wake of an application by Spain and Portugal to join the Western European Union (W.E.U.), a military grouping of several NATO members created in 1954. (This November both countries were admitted after Spain agreed to create a rapid intervention force and accept NATO nuclear policy.)

Spain is prevented by the 1986 referendum from assigning its forces to NATO commands. Yet as a member of the W.E.U., its armed forces automatically come under the control of NATO's Supreme Allied Command-Europe. The French and German desire to create a "European pillar" within NATO has revived the long-moribund W.E.U. and made it an important forum for debates about European arms production and out-of-area NATO operations. Spain is discovering how difficult it is to be a nonnuclear country in a nuclear alliance.

A few days after the imminent signing of the new agreement was announced, U.S. Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci told the Madrid newspaper *El País* that he was happy with the outcome because it did not go against official U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Yet a poll taken at the time showed that a large majority of the Spanish people saw the agreement as an abandonment of González's referendum promises. The Socialist government's dilemma is that both sides in the 1986 referendum were agreed on the need to reduce the U.S. presence in Spain. A delighted Washington was able to show Philippine President Corazon Aquino and Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou the contradictory text of its new eight-year agreement with Spain as an example for them to follow as well. In mid-October, the United States and the Philippines concluded a new agreement on Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. In its failure to pose any questions about nuclear weapons, that document might have been directly inspired by the precedent set in Madrid. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS.

On the Edge of Silence

GEORGE PACKER

WHITE BOY RUNNING. By Christopher Hope. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 273 pp. \$16.95.

WHITE WRITING: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa. By J.M. Coetzee. Yale University Press. 193 pp. \$19.95.

THE ESSENTIAL GESTURE: Writing, Politics and Places. By Nadine Gordimer. Alfred A. Knopf. 356 pp. \$19.95.

What can still be said about South Africa? The flock of editorialists, coffee-shop theorists and book reviewers who only two years ago were wondering whether the apartheid regime would outlast the decade have moved on to other subjects. How many ways can you restate that the blacks want nothing short of power and the whites won't give it up? The subject is not just too intractable but also too loaded for genuine engagement. And if you happen to live there, you can say less and less because the state has tightened its grip on permissible speech. It has been illegal even to ask on a T-shirt for the release of detainees. The silence of an exhausted attention span here; the silence of arrests, censors and bans there.

Yet the books keep coming, to awaken us for a moment to the intensifying agony of South Africa. The three under review here all ask, in different ways, the question posed above, especially as it applies to a highly uneasy group—South African writers, specifically white writers. How can they survive?

They can't—at least not in ways that one would recognize. That is the answer of these books, especially of Nadine Gordimer's, and it seems the only honest one. The white liberal position in South Africa no longer exists. Anyone who clings to it is either advocating apartheid with a human face, knows the score but can't bring him- or herself to side with black revolutionaries, or has stopped living in the present. And the novel as it has been known in the West, a product of liberal capitalism, with its concern for the individual and his separate destiny,

has no more chance of surviving the whirlwind with its old form intact than has the face of Johannesburg or the makeup of Parliament. Not just because the freedom to be irrelevant is now evaporating under the sun of a catastrophe but because whatever culture emerges from the ruins will have blacks at its center; whites, who have never been able to imagine themselves anywhere else, will be on the periphery. To create anything meaningful, to create at all, they will have to submit their consciousness to that new centrifugal force. The liberal white novel will seem as quaint and anachronistic written after the apartheid era as the old Afrikaans farm novel seems now.

(What the new literature will look like, whether we will admire or even read it, is impossible to know. Perhaps literature will be as alienated from the new order as it is from the old. Perhaps it will be as harassed, too.)

But there is a sense in which liberal whites have always been on the South African periphery, even while they've held automatic membership in the white ego of apartheid South Africa. Christopher Hope, a writer of Irish Catholic stock (and thus a minority within a minority within a minority), felt his existence in South Africa anchored by so little substance and buoyed by so much "incorrigible lightness" that in 1974, at age 30, caught between the nationalisms of Afrikaners and blacks, he floated off to exile in London.

White Boy Running is Hope's account of his brief return on the eve of last year's whites-only election. Foreknowledge of the result—the rise of the right and fall of the liberals—shadows Hope's book. According to him, white liberalism has been steadily perishing, and aiding in its own destruction, since 1948, "the killer year" when the great text of liberalism, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, was published and the National Party came to power on the apartheid platform. Hope was 4 and chasing ice cream carts in Johannesburg at the time. *White Boy Running* threads together two books: an autobiographical journey through the South Africa in which the author grew up, and a parallel, essentially political commentary on what he finds upon return to each familiar place. He is a man going

from room to room in his childhood home; the rooms aren't empty, but the relatives have all grown more deranged.

Life for an English-speaking white boy in the years after 1948 brought the moral horror of Afrikaner orthodoxy. Even as a child Hope experienced the adult exile's unbelief. When his family moved to Pretoria, he says, "I began almost immediately to suffer from the first signs of a failure of faith—not in my Catholicism, but in the existence of my country as a real place." Or in his own and his tribe's existence there—the tribe with neither true power nor a grievance, which hates the place as it is but can't bear to change it.

Blacks are absent from *White Boy Running*, merely strangers banished from his youth. What obsessed him then, besides Elvis and rectors and sex, was Afrikaners. They were the Elephant Bird of a Pretoria dinosaur museum, "a very curious, hefty, thoroughly muscular creature, something like a giant ostrich, ridiculous to look at" (but not as ridiculous as the Dodo, aka the white liberal). Yet the adult Hope never imagines that the Elephant Bird is really on the verge of extinction. After 1976, after 1986, it remains in its fortified nest. Anyway it's flightless—where would it go?

Hope found it still in place last year, busily engaged in a ritual that bore some resemblance to an election. Only now the National Party, which last time he checked was "dedicated to the antediluvian, conceived in reaction," has become the party of reform; which makes the Progressives—what? In the government's view, the party of the African National Congress (A.N.C.); in Hope's view, the party of "bankruptcy." The only South Africans who seem able to see clearly and mean what they say are blacks and the white right. In a brilliant and scary set piece, the leader of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (A.W.B.), Eugene Terre'Blanche, mesmerizes a hall of armed working-class whites with wit, furor and his call for a Boer nation. "White voters will have to decide between the A.W.B. or the A.N.C.," Hope interprets: "This crude and simple challenge seems to me to be nothing less than the truth."

Could white liberalism have made any difference in the past forty years? Whatever the answer, Hope charges liberals with not just bad faith—"However much we might disapprove of [the gov-

George Packer's first book, *The Village of Waiting*, was recently published by Viking.

ernment's] racial policies, we believe we sleep securely in the knowledge of the brutal efficiency of its police"—but with complacency, arrogance and prolonged self-delusion. Liberals complain that democratic rights are shrinking; they never recognized the hoax of the democracy itself.

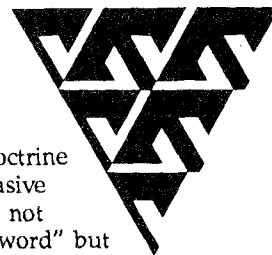
But false consciousness is not a problem just for members of the Progressive Federal Party. It is the occupational hazard of a writer in exile; and it haunts the narrative of Hope's return, in which the contemporary passages, always intelligent, are strangely disengaged and less affecting than the memoir. He's gone back home in disguise, as a foreigner; yet underneath he is still a family member, mortified and helpless. So his superb pieces of description or insight are often betrayed by a kind of sniggering coda that sounds like a native son's cover for despair: "It is the sort of conversation that makes me want to go and stick my head in a bucket of ice-cold water."

Irony is the voice of a South African who has a special grasp of the horror settling over "his" "country" but still hasn't worked out his relation to it, who can't get rid of the quotation marks. These punctuate what Nadine Gordimer calls the dissident white writer's "double alienation." A book by a foreigner (Joseph Lelyveld's *Move Your Shadow* is an example) can come closer to a tragic point of view because there is less at stake for the author. A portion of Hope's irony is always reserved for himself. After all, having nothing else to offer, he too is a liberal.

Near the end of his stay in South Africa, Hope gives a reading in Soweto. His audience includes "a good number of brooding young men who exude a sense of skepticism, even hostility, which their courteous attention to my opening remarks cannot disguise." The evening begins inauspiciously. A poem in the point of view of a self-blinding white who can't comprehend black repudiation brings angry interruptions, and Hope never finishes it.

Then he tries reading from his recent novel *The Hottentot Room*. And a stunning thing happens. The tension doesn't vanish; the interruptions don't stop, in fact they increase by the page; but "what is happening here is that my novel is being written by the audience, a task in which I am invited to join. . . . A more conventional audience would not put these questions. A more pedantic author might reply loftily, 'What I have written, I have written!' But this is no place for pedant-

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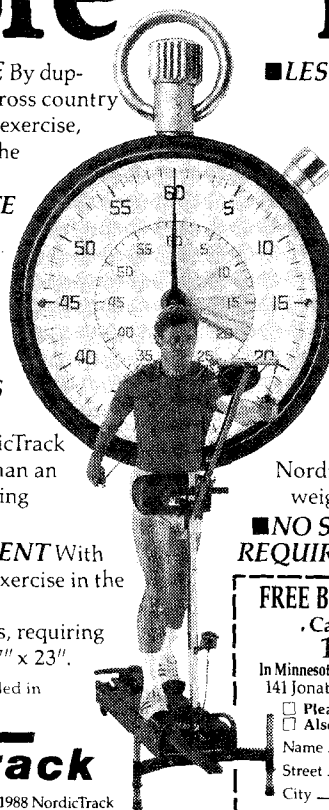
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ry." And when the ordeal is over, he wonders: "What more could a writer ask?"

Hope wandered into a hornet's nest, and he and his book were brought to life in unimagined ways. This didn't mean that everyone was suddenly ready to be brothers under the skin. The poem, after all, couldn't even be read. The net effect of the scene is no reassuring plug for free speech in wartime; it is as chilling as it is moving. But it suggests at least the possibility that decency, beauty and intelligence will survive the South African nightmare. It gives a glimpse of a South Africa Christopher Hope might find a way to live in.

White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa is a reminder that J.M. Coetzee is not only one of the world's leading novelists but also professor of general literature at the University of Cape Town. Its prose, dry as the Western Cape, contains too many sentences like this:

Is it a version of utopianism (or pastoralism) to look forward (or backward) to the day when the truth will be (or was) what is said, not what is not said, when we will hear (or heard) music as sound upon silence, not silence between sounds?

Nor is its subject—literature up to World War II by white South Africans, much of it in Afrikaans and unavailable in translation—going to appeal to more than a handful of readers.

But Coetzee manages to be interesting, even when abstruse. "What relation," he asks, "is it possible for man to have with rock and sun?" South Africa's natives, far from providing "materials to fill out its discourse," have always been part of its emptiness, appallingly idle and hardly human to the early travel writers and later novelists. From the beginning, the white writer has been perched over the threat of silence, "an inability to conceive a society in South Africa in which there is a place for the self."

In his own novels, Coetzee confronts this extinguishing of the self with a type of quietism. There can be no salvation inside history. The simple harelip hero of *Life & Times of Michael K* finds, amid the devastation of civil war and the wire fencing of ideology, that "it is enough to be out of the camps, out of all the camps at the same time." But Nadine Gordimer, in a review not included in *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*, has asked in response: "Is there an idea of survival that can be realized entirely outside a political doctrine? Is there a

space that lies between camps?"

Gordimer's implicit answer is no. And it seems to me that the whole direction of *The Essential Gesture* is toward finding a place for the white writer inside history that allows for a unity of life and art. Today, for her, that means finding a place inside the struggle for liberation. Tomorrow it will mean a place inside a black South Africa. The first travel writers were stunned by what they saw as an empty land and empty people. At the end of three hundred years of trying to appropriate both, whites have again come face to face with their own inconsequence, the possibility of having no place in a country of blacks.

Gordimer, more than any other white writer, has escaped what Coetzee calls the "literature of failure, of the failure of the historical imagination." Gordimer, more than any other, has made herself a part of the history of her time and place at every turn, always prepared to raise the deeper question and then answer it. This is not incidental to the brilliance of her prose style and imagination; it fires both. It also demands more than mere brilliance from her writing, and in some cases it damages her writing. The unity of life and art is an unfinished struggle that vitalizes every page of *The Essential Gesture*.

This is a record of one writer's argument with herself and her society over three tumultuous decades. The rigor of her engagement is as exhausting as it is remarkable. The essays from the period before the black nationalist movements were banned and South Africa became a police state have a lighter tone; but humor is no longer part of Gordimer's arsenal, and the pieces from the violent 1980s are fierce and relentless, occasionally theoretical with scraps from Benjamin and Lukács, more often sharply figurative: "In South Africa the ivory tower is bulldozed anew with every black man's home destroyed to make way for a white man's."

Gordimer was never a "moderate." In 1959, in a piece about decolonization called "Where Do Whites Fit In?" she speculated that whites under black rule would have to see themselves as "foreign experts, employed at the Government's pleasure," or else leave. That was less hopeful (and probably less acute) than her reformulation of the question twenty-three years later, in "Living in the Interregnum": "[Skills] do not constitute a claim on the future. That claim rests on

something else: how to offer *one's self*." Between these two essays we can measure the change in Gordimer's thinking and its intensity: from seeing the crisis as a political problem happening mainly to other people—Albert Luthuli, Bram Fischer—to experiencing it as existentially, morally, practically involving herself. Her writing is at its best when she is not the objective observer.

It reaches a peak of power and complexity in two of the last essays, "Living in the Interregnum" and "The Essential Gesture." They stand as a challenge to herself and other whites, especially the white writer, "to find a way to reconcile the irreconcilable within himself, establish his relation to the culture of a new kind of posited community, non-racial but conceived with and led by blacks." It is not enough to be "against" apartheid. If only this, one "remains *negatively* within the white order," a charge that might be leveled at Christopher Hope. It is not enough (she tells a New York audience) to be against the abuses of Communism: "Have we to tell the poor and dispossessed of the world there is nothing else to be done than to turn back from the communist bosses to the capitalist bosses?"

Gordimer's arguments take her further than most would go. "Art is on the side of the oppressed," she states flatly and provocatively. "In South Africa the essential gesture by which [the writer] enters the brotherhood of man . . . is a revolutionary gesture." Is J.M. Coetzee on the side of the oppressed? All of them? Like God and Flaubert, he would probably swear off choosing sides at all. Would he be less an artist? If truth is revolutionary, is it also then the revolutionary line?

Gordimer rejects orthodoxy where she sees it but she sometimes eases into it without seeing. Elsewhere she moves out of the declarative mood into the interrogative, as if the trail she'd been following suddenly gave out onto the view of a drop into a sea where any artist would drown. She says she has only two absolutes: that racism is evil and that a writer is doomed if the link between inwardness and the world is severed. But she admits that in her country and her time, "The coexistence of these absolutes often seems irreconcilable within one life, for me."

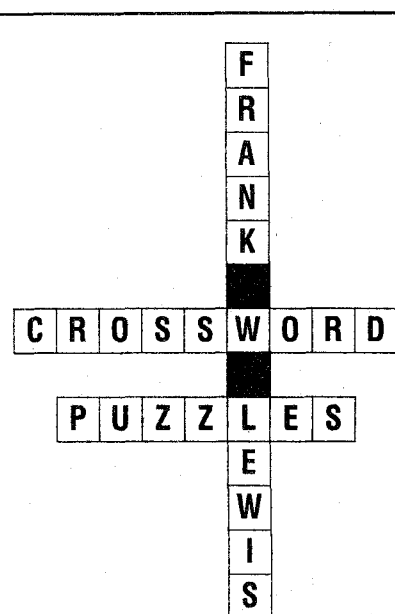
The contradictions that she bravely exposes, many observed through the specimen of her own life, are the "morbid symptoms" of Gramsci's "interreg-

num" between the dying old order and the emergent new. Last year Gordimer published *A Sport of Nature*, a true product of the interregnum. It isn't going too far (only as far as *The Essential Gesture*) to say that this novel exists to posit a literature and white identity in the black-led order to come. It is Azania's first book. The opening third still takes place in the familiar Gordimer world of the old order, of conscience-stricken whites facing impossible dilemmas in the suburbs. But when her heroine, Hillela, leaves South Africa, tramps around the rest of the continent, marries a revolutionary, goes to work for the A.N.C. after he's killed, then marries an African president and finally attends the ceremony of independence in what was once Cape Town, we have left the liberal novel behind and entered a strange hybrid of inspirational fable and panoramic political tract.

Unsurprisingly, the first hundred pages are the more fully imagined, and the rest, despite patches of heart-stopping language, seems generalized and artificial, meanders and dissipates its strength. Hillela represents a new type of white African: takes the name Chiemeka, wears head scarves, chats as easily with market women in Lusaka as with party apparatchiks in Moscow and Brahmins in the Back Bay, longs for babies of all colors, bears one that is black—possible, it seems, because Hillela herself is innocent of racial feeling. She is also rather mindless, highly sexed and has a streak of power-worship in her when it comes to black politicians.

I doubt that Gordimer is saying this is how whites will have to be in the new order; but it's fair to ask what she is saying, for this novel has nothing in common with what the Gordimer of *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* would see as the motive for writing. It is a deliberate flight from the intractable difficulties that those books hotly face and know—all the while nagging the Western reader about the sacrifices these people have to make and he or she doesn't. It also ignores the advice of "The Essential Gesture": "I doubt whether the white writer . . . has much social use in inspiring."

A Sport of Nature is a daydream from an age of in-between. It demonstrates the inadequacy of the old white novel with its alien, victimized blacks, and the impossibility of any new kind while so much remains unreconciled and unreconcilable. Coetzee has pointed out that the South African novel doesn't know how



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to end. One could add, because of the apparent endlessness of the "South African way of life." But "it changes," says the sticker Gordimer once saw on a taxi in Accra; it is ending. And if literature in some form survives the horror that South Africa's whites, barricaded in swimming pools, have determined to bring down

on white and black alike, it will owe a great deal to Gordimer's struggle to begin remaking it now. In the meantime, essays are perhaps the best tools available for a white writer to break the silence of South Africa. The ones in *The Essential Gesture* will strike your ears with the clangor of difficult truth. □

A Gay, Polyglot Dickens

JAMES MARCUS

THE STANDARD LIFE OF A TEMPORARY PANTYHOSE SALESMAN. By Aldo Busi. Translated by Raymond Rosenthal. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 430 pp. \$25.

Aldo Busi, the author at age 40 of three novels, one unclassifiable "memoir" and numerous translations, is already being hailed as the foremost Italian writer of his generation. Such praise—which personifies a generation sufficiently to equip it with a voice, a conscience, even a heart, but seldom a brain—most often prepares us for a letdown. However, Busi, who modestly admits to being "Italy's greatest living writer," may actually come within a stone's throw of his own hyperbole. His novels overflow with a density of intelligence and energy, sometimes impassable, always fascinating; swarming through them are a gallery of characters who, pushed beyond caricature into a kind of monstrous realism, seem like the work of a gay, meaner-spirited, polyglot Dickens. Busi differs most noticeably from the previous generation of Italian writers by his *Europeanness*, his sense of a post-war Continent whose frontiers have been blurred by multinational business and migrant labor pools. This blurring is further enhanced by Busi's sense of homosexuality as a "stateless" condition.

Angelo Bazarovi, the hero of Busi's second novel, narrates the "many surprises . . . in the standard existence of a temporary pantyhose salesman on the brink of getting his driver's license and his degree." The reader follows Angelo as he cruises the gay beaches at Lake

Garda, labors at poorly paid translations, broods over amorous disappointments or does a stint as a clerk in a china and glassware store. The heart of the book, however, concerns his involvement with Celestino Lometto, an obese pantyhose magnate. Hired as a translator, Angelo roams through the Common Market countries in Lometto's company, cutting deals in all the languages of Europe.

From the moment Angelo first sees him, Lometto waddles through the story like a badly groomed force of nature:

A mass of sweating flesh restrained by white-and-bluish shorts unloads from the seat onto the scorching asphalt. The face is a battleground of rivulets in which the small pale eyes, each on its own as after great tension, struggle to regain a single direction. The man is a bowling ball of fat with extremities that drag themselves to the small gate in absurd black shoes with India-rubber soles.

A creature of excess, the nouveau riche Lometto represents everything Angelo despises about contemporary Italy, which, "from industry to university, from culture to politics, was an immense geographic basin of thefts." He swindles customers, pilfers from his neighbors, derives a smug contentment from his power and seldom looks far beyond his wallet, "the only true terminal of his nervous system."

The two argue furiously about almost everything as Lometto pilots his sedan around Germany, Holland, Belgium, Austria, France and Scandinavia. Angelo barely makes a dent in the manufacturer's mental life; Lometto, for his part, would rather offer up nuggets from his copy of *1,069 Jokes of TV Comedians*. According to Angelo, the abyss between the two of them runs much deeper than character or income. As a homosexual without money, Angelo is emphatically cut out of his own society; at one point, he notes, "he felt how tired

he was of belonging to a *species* to which he did not belong." This isolation, as ugly as it is, has the compensatory effect of making him singular, self-generated, oddly genuine. Lometto, on the other hand, is hardly more than a node in an economic system:

Angelo socially was nobody, but what he was *he was*. . . . He was everything he had and he was everything he carried with him in life, besides a change of underwear in his bag. Lometto had billions in personal possessions and real estate, he determined the fate of dozens of families, he had sons of his own, a wife just as spiritual about the dogma of property, and he was continually gratified by a social hatred and envy which stimulated him to obtain always more. . . . But on his own he would not have had the capacity to *be*.

By itself, this polemic might swiftly escalate into a dull morality play—Sensitive Rebel versus Crude Philistine, fifteen rounds. What saves it, and the novel, is the growing attachment between the antagonists. "A new era was beginning, the Bazarovi-Lometto era." Lometto introduces Angelo to his wife, Edda, and his children—three handsome sons with an adolescent zeal for taxidermy. As he becomes a household fixture, Angelo also finds himself drawn into an increasingly bizarre labyrinth of Lomettian schemes. The immense hosiery mogul has raised his sights beyond pantyhose, to illicit pharmaceuticals, stolen watches and ersatz champagne. In addition, he and Edda have hatched a surreal dynastic plot, whereby she will bear another son in the United States: Born on American soil, this fourth Lometto will be eligible to become an American President, the most sublime consolidation of family power imaginable in a NATO Italy.

Repelled and fascinated, Angelo initially plays along. He senses an eagerness in Lometto to educate him, to teach him the birds and bees of economic life. But finally the translator begins to resist this corruption, the work of a mind "interested only in increasing the *bulk* of life, not its value." After a period of treacherous power struggles—during which Angelo accompanies Edda to America to help her produce the presidential Lometto—the two friends end up in a venomous stalemate. Even in his final denunciation, however, Angelo admits that his affection hasn't yet completely eroded: "You're vulgar, stupid, arrogant, on the political plane you're every-

James Marcus, who received the 1988 PEN/Renato Poggioli Prize, translated Aldo Busi's Poetry for the recent English-language issue of *Nuovi Argomenti*.

thing I hate most. . . . I'd like to have you executed in a public square, but the doors to my house will remain open to you until your fate is decided." Finally, the "human plane" outweighs the political one. Compared with the thin diet of ideology, human relationships, with all their indigestible particulars, seem like a positive feast. Indeed, this very appetite gives Busi's novel its particular pathos: No matter how failed, compromised or wrecked Angelo's affections become, he pursues them down to the last crumb.

The vehicle for these pursuits is, of course, Busi's prose. Just as Angelo is preeminently a product of himself, manufacturing his own character as a cottage industry, so would Busi have us believe that he's a similarly self-generated writer, free of influence. In a recent interview, he noted that "since there is only one reality, take it or leave it, I constructed one for myself in my own image and likeness—I believe Someone Else already attempted the same task." (Now, *there's* a pedigree!) Certainly the writers Busi has chosen to translate offer some signposts. The lush exfoliating metaphors of John Ashbery have left their mark on his style; his outsize, oratorical approach to character sometimes recalls that of Christina Stead. In the end, though, Busi is that frightening thing: an original.

Predictably enough, such originality carries a price tag. *The Standard Life of a Temporary Pantyhose Salesman* includes moments of pulverizing dullness, which recall Henry James's gloss on Proust: "Inconceivable boredom associated with the most extreme ecstasy which it is possible to imagine." At times the cascade of metaphor grows clotted, silly, incomprehensible. Still, Raymond Rosenthal, a gifted translator of Primo Levi and Giovanni Verga, has risen to the challenge of Busi's style with unflagging ingenuity. And at its best, the novel gives us a taste of the metaphysical shiver Angelo feels when he confronts Edda Lometto's newborn infant: "He also felt more expanded spiritually, as if he had touched something tangible, not dangerously universal and hence not liable to bend like taffy to the interests and tastes of the first insolent person to appear with a mouthful of absolute values." *Touching something tangible*: the phrase, with its self-evident logic, might anyway serve as Busi's motto, the goal of a man bent on testing the coin of reality between his teeth. □

The Dating Game

DAVID NASAW

FROM FRONT PORCH TO BACK SEAT: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America. By Beth L. Bailey. The Johns Hopkins University Press. 181 pp. \$18.95.

A 1920s article from *Harper's* tells the story of the unfortunate young man who went "calling" on the city girl only to find that "she had her hat on." He had expected to spend the evening in the parlor, probably with her mother as chaperon, "perhaps to have some refreshments or to listen to her play the piano. . . . She expected a 'date.' . . . He ended up spending four weeks' savings fulfilling her expectations."

The young man should have known better. According to Beth Bailey, author of *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*, by the 1920s dating had already replaced calling as the dominant rite of courtship. The man was expected to "ask" the girl "out" and to provide the money to pay for the "date." The girl was expected to repay him with her companionship and, perhaps, a bit more.

Calling had been a private event that occurred within the domain of home and family. Dating moved courtship away from the home—and the watchful eyes of the women—into "the public world" of "restaurants, theaters, and dance halls," where men with money made the decisions. As the dating manuals and advisers would remind the young for the next fifty years, dating was a man's prerogative. Girls not only had no right to ask for a date; they also had no business suggesting where the date might take place. Since the man had to bear the expense, he alone would decide where they were going.

Calling had been a prelude to marriage. Dating, as described by Bailey, was a competitive sport played by young, middle-class heterosexuals who tested their popularity by seeing how many "high-rated" dates they could get. While any date was better than none, dates with popular boys and girls were worth more than dates with "semigoons" or anyone found in the library after dark.

David Nasaw is the author of *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (Oxford University Press).

The "rating-and-dating" system, as sociologist Willard Waller, the reigning expert on the field, labeled it in 1937, did not survive World War II. It was difficult to play the game while the boys were overseas. On their return, the boys themselves, now veterans, gave it up entirely. As "Lieutenant Mike Carter, Eighth Army Air Force, told a *Mademoiselle* interviewer. . . . 'A boy wants to know where he stands . . . not all this beating around the bush. I'm not looking for the most popular girl on the dance floor now.'" He was looking for a wife.

In the postwar years, the age of marriage fell significantly. So did the age of dating. The younger teen-agers, like their elders, abandoned the whirlwind of competitive dating for something more secure. Too young to marry, they did the next best thing—they went "steady."

There is, from the vantage point of the present, something pathetically poignant about the young steadies of the 1950s clinging to one another wrapped in their security blankets: their rings, their sweaters, their nightly phone calls, their continually repeated pledges of fidelity. What did it all mean? Bailey can only begin to explore the significance. "Going steady," she tells us, "represented a secure niche in a competitive and uncertain world." It provided, as the psychologists put it, "date security," allowing "youth to escape the 'discomfort' of participating in the 'fiercely competitive business of dating'—at least for a while."

Relying almost entirely on the testimony of adult experts, Bailey overemphasizes the "going steady" mania just as she had earlier exaggerated the significance of the "rating-and-dating" system. But, as she tells us in the introduction, her book is about dating "conventions," not experience, and she is probably correct in reporting that in the 1950s the adult experts abandoned their preoccupation with rating and dating for their new obsession, going steady.

The adults were appalled at the teen-agers' retreat from competitive dating. The dating game, the experts insinuated, prepared the young for adult life. Going steady would only get them into trouble. How, for example, could boys learn about women if they dated only one girl a year instead of fifty? The dangers for girls were even greater: "Joyce Jackson's *Guide to Dating* argued that going steady

inevitably led girls to heavy necking and thus to guilt for the rest of their lives. . . . Better to date strangers, she concluded, than to end up necking with a steady boyfriend."

Though it took two to tango, the adult experts held only the girls responsible for "going too far." Boys could not be expected to control their ravenous animal appetites. "By the logic of the sys-

tem all unsanctioned sexual acts were the woman's fault: either she had not set limits or she was not truly virtuous." Although Bailey is not as clear on this as she might be, blaming the girls for going too far is not a twentieth-century invention. As Christine Stansell has shown us in *City of Women*, it is a time-honored excuse offered by middle-class males caught with their pants down.

Throughout her study, Bailey uses—skillfully—a variety of metaphors to describe dating. Her central metaphor is an economic one. Dates (the events and the persons) were commodities whose value was determined by the amount of money spent on them. The money had to be conspicuously consumed in public. The exchange of money validated the event. A date that cost nothing did not truly count as a date. The boys had to come up with the money, but this obligation carried with it the power to define the worth of the girl they asked out. Girls could, if they chose, try to enhance their value by altering their appearance and anatomy, but it would still be the boys, in the long run, who determined how much they were worth.

Dating, as Bailey describes it here, was a minefield. Girls could lose their reputations and, the experts warned, their chance for successful marriage if they went too far. They might even provoke their dates to sexual violence. The dangers for boys were less dramatic but real nonetheless. They could go bankrupt. The cost of dinners, dances and corsages was substantial; the combined pressures of getting the right date and then raising the money to finance it could be overwhelming. Bailey warns against a misplaced nostalgia for the dating conventions blown away by what she calls the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s. "Our past does not contain a golden age of courtship, and the 'security' of the post-war era was bought at great price."

Beth Bailey, as one can see from this brief summary, is a clever historian. Her book is a fascinating study of an important part of our recent past. I only wish that there were more of it.

The "how to" and "what not to" manuals, books, magazine articles, polls and college courses about dating, courtship and marriage practices provide the text that Bailey dutifully interprets. And within the conventions of academic discourse, she succeeds most of the time. But there are other layers of analysis that go begging. Why, precisely, did the adult experts write what they did when

DONEGAL

Bog cotton and whin. A stone
gets up and is a black-faced
sheep. Between a fog
and a rain, mist hangs,
vaporous as the lace
across these *Gaeltacht* windows.

Now I understand
why treelessness and
bog that keeps brown water
are in me like a code,
Grandfather. These crossroads
where I try to place you
could be on Iceland
or the moon, and all
I hoard of you won't fill
the shallowest socket
rain has worked in limestone.

Were you to stand under
a signpost here, translating
An Clochan Liath for me,
I wouldn't know you
as I don't what flowers
ascetically out of these rocks.
But as if the dead
merely exile themselves
to wander with the sheep,
I still expect you here,
maybe among the offspring
of some O'Donnell chief,
hiding out another century.

Which of these golden beaches
curving west toward Massachusetts
held you at the Cape
long after summer? What lough
do I render to your name;
which crossing of three roads
and red-haired children?

There was a Viking back there
in our turfpile, behind a child's
version of your face, and some
of us are redheads still.
But to say how the world began
where sheep lie down for
the journey into quartzite,
I will have to learn that single
jog of the head
men use to speak paragraphs
on the weather and the hard road
around here, where a lark
goes up each morning,
singing to penetrate the sun.

Brendan Galvin

they did? And, as important, what influence did these texts have on those who were supposed to read and heed them? As Michael Schudson warned in *Advertising: The Uneasy Persuasion*, "Studies that examine the symbols alone can make vital contributions but take the risk of sociological irrelevance if they do not consider the intentions of the symbol makers or the meanings that the audiences actually take from the cultural products in question." It is not enough to simply describe the conventions or symbols of advertising, dating, or any other cultural system. The critic and historian must attempt to get behind the symbols, to understand what they signified and how important they were for the symbol makers and their audiences.

Though the advice columns prattled endlessly, first about rating and dating, then about going steady, and throughout about the high cost of dates and the importance of good grooming (for girls) and fat wallets (for boys), one wonders, with Bailey, to what extent these "media representatives . . . were doing much more than documenting" dating trends. The conventions Bailey describes may tell us more about adult needs than teenage dating practices. The adult experts might have been searching for conventions to govern their own gender roles and relationships in a world where nothing could be taken for granted. Projecting their need for order onto their children might have been the best solvent for their own anxieties.

Dating is a cultural form embedded in a larger culture and society. It is not enough to tie its practices to that larger society through metaphors of competition and commodification alone. (All contemporary cultural systems can be described in these terms. Try to imagine one that cannot. Sports? Housekeeping? Schooling? Child-rearing?) Dating must also be studied within the context of changing gender roles and relationships and changing youth and adolescent cultures. Daters were experimenting with, playing at, gender roles and relationships. They were, at the same time, immersed in a newly developing youth culture with its own symbols, values and standards of behavior.

It is, I fear, because Bailey's study lacks a larger context that she ends up taking the adult experts' advice, observations and complaints far too seriously. There is little here to leaven their weighty pronouncements.

Bailey's study has given the adult experts their say. Future chroniclers and analysts can now look beyond their horizons to the larger world of the daters. In doing so, they might learn a great deal from the tons of novels, popular songs, plays and movies, posters and

portraits, autobiographical musings, interviews, comic books (the perpetually popular *Archie*, for example), advertisements and oral histories that describe gender relationships and roles, dating practices and youth culture in the twentieth century. □

All Fall Down

JAMES LIEBER

AND THE WOLF FINALLY CAME: *The Decline of the American Steel Industry.* By John P. Hoerr. University of Pittsburgh Press. 689 pp. \$39.95. Paper \$14.95.

For two-thirds of this century, Pittsburgh was co-capital (with Detroit) of the industrial world. John Hoerr, a senior writer for *Business Week*, grew up in the area during the 1940s and 1950s, the heyday of steel. Over the years, he followed the fortunes of the industry and the region. In 1965, he was among the first writers to forecast Pittsburgh's decline as a steel center. In 1982—steel's plague year, the industry lost over \$3 billion—he witnessed the massive dislocation resulting from shutdowns in the Monongahela Valley, and began research for a book that would offer an explanation. Later he took an unpaid leave of absence from *Business Week* and produced a huge manuscript which was rejected by ten publishers. Fortunately the University of Pittsburgh, which has supplanted steel to become the largest employer in the region, saw fit to publish it. There seems to be a market for "the reason why" of deindustrialization. Issued initially in August, the book has already gone into its second printing.

Hoerr sets the stage by offering good short histories of the companies, especially the dominant U.S. Steel (now USX), and of the United Steelworkers (U.S.W.). He also examines his own roots as a sometime steel worker and son of the owner of a now closed hotel and bar frequented by the millwrights, operators and laborers at U.S. Steel's National Tube Works in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Hoerr recalls the boom town of his youth, a bastion of ethnic pluralism, patriotism, good schools, soccer leagues and prim

neighborhoods where hourly and salaried workers lived side by side.

Not surprisingly, McKeesport fared poorly when the mills closed. Five percent of laid-off employees in a survey cited by Hoerr said that they had seriously considered suicide. Residential real estate values plummeted, public works decayed and the downtown area, once home to 700 retail establishments, grew shabby and deserted. Hoerr interviewed the survivors, including a labor vagabond who had returned from a trek through the Sun Belt looking for work; a promising graduate student in biophysics who gave up his studies for better money in the mill and for union politics only to find in middle age that he had neither an employer nor a local; the owner of a large, now empty department store who lives like a hermit in the shell of his unsalable building; and a former middle manager who has erased the credentials on his résumé in order to get minimum wage jobs.

What happened to the mighty American steel industry? Hoerr identifies most of the factors leading to the fall, including cut-rate, often subsidized, foreign competition; high domestic interest rates; slow domestic depreciation rates; cartelized pricing; inadequate capital improvements; inadequate research and development; too much vertical integration (owning rather than buying or leasing ore, coke and barge and rail services); bloated management; and the maintenance of excessive production capacity in the face of flattened demand. But what sets Hoerr's book apart from the bulk of writing on the industry is his focus on labor relations. As a rule, C.E.O.s are recruited from engineering, finance, sales or law, but rarely from the personnel side of a business. Hoerr believes, and this is controversial, but I think accurate, that steel's demise followed mainly from horrendous labor relations.

The ambiance in steel plants typically has been negative, adversarial and wasteful. U.S. Steel, which long called the tune for the industry, subscribed to

James Lieber practices law in Pittsburgh. He is at work on a book about the employee buyout of Weirton Steel.

the "scientific management" method of work organization pioneered by Frederick W. Taylor at the turn of the century. The by now familiar Taylorist approach encouraged management to regard employees as appendages to machines—workers who need little training and no knowledge of the operation beyond their rigidly defined work assignments. Job satisfaction plays no part in productivity; the only worker incentive is pay. Sam Camens, a U.S.W. official, explained to Hoerr how Taylorism worked in the mills:

You were told when to do something, how to do something, how far you could go. Every job was broken down to its smallest integral part so that, as we said in the plants, "You could hire any dumb hunk off the boat and put him into the plant, and he could do the job." . . . And it developed a perception in America that you've got to guard a worker, that he can't be trusted, that you've got to have a foreman on his back, that he's irresponsible.

Like traffic cops ordered to give out a certain number of tickets, foremen also had quotas of employee infractions to meet. As the saying goes, a work day often amounted to "punching in, catching hell, and punching out."

Hostile to their employers, some workers pilfered, read, napped or took drugs on the job. Hoerr describes his own experience as a bored mill worker with a do-nothing job. At contract time the union's objective was to get as much money out of the companies as possible, preserve useless past practices and increase crew sizes. By 1980, the domestic industry had lost its cost and productivity advantages over competitors. It took

9 hours to produce a ton of steel in the United States, compared with 8.5 hours in Canada and 7.4 hours in Japan. To manufacture a ton of steel cost U.S. producers \$307, compared with \$218 in Canada and \$183 in Japan.

Hoerr believes that the steel workers union avoided taking responsibility for the industry's health and was a partner with management in the decline. "We decided," Ben Fischer, a former top U.S.W. negotiator who now teaches at Carnegie-Mellon University, told Hoerr, "that management ran the show and that our only course was to demand more of the pie. We accommodated to the notion that unions have a limited function in industry. Labor accepted the residual rights of management theory in the 1940s and established its own downfall."

In the best section of the book, Hoerr shows that the U.S.W. once knew better. Three extraordinary aides to founding union president Philip Murray—Clint Golden, Harold Ruttenberg and Joe Scanlon—won his support for union-management cooperation teams on the shop floor and for giving labor a stake in benefits derived from increased productivity. Such employee participation plans actually were installed in a number of small steel companies. The left attacked workers involved in cooperation as "capitalist factotems." The National Association of Manufacturers saw labor-management collaboration as a means of "sovietizing" American industry. After World War II, Murray and the U.S.W. turned their backs on cooperation, and Scanlon, Ruttenberg and Golden were eased or squeezed out of the union. Scanlon went on to teach industrial relations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His "Scanlon Plans"—embracing humane work organizations that invest employees in company performances—have been adopted by thousands of small firms.

In the 1950s notions of steel worker input and cooperation further receded as the union engaged in industrywide bargaining led by U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel. Top negotiator Bruce Johnston of U.S. Steel maligned worker participation as "a favorite of the university people." Intended to prevent any one company from reaping the benefits of a strike against another, group bargaining failed because domestic steel buyers turned to foreign sources before and during industrywide strikes. As a result, the industry and the union signed their first Experimental Negotiation Agreement in 1973. The U.S.W., headed by

I.W. Abel, agreed to drop the right to strike in return for annual raises of 3 percent, plus cost of living adjustments pegged to inflation, both compounded annually. "Once this machine started operating," writes Hoerr, "its generative ability was awesome." Between 1973 and 1981, compensation rose 260 percent, and U.S. steel work became the highest paid industrial work in the world. In 1982, losing \$90 per ton of steel produced, the industry triggered a convulsive round of concessions and closings during which U.S.W. president Lloyd McBride (who privately believed steel workers made too much money), had a fatal heart attack. Several major companies, including LTV and Wheeling-Pittsburgh, went into bankruptcy, and others, such as USX and National Steel, diversified in order to minimize their reliance on steel. The wolf finally came.

To John Hoerr, employee participation and ownership are the last best hopes for saving mainland industry and jobs. He cites a variety of turnarounds at American companies, including one at a General Motors plant where labor policy had been as imperious as at U.S. Steel. G.M.'s plant in Fremont, California, had been the corporation's worst in terms of quality and the highest in absenteeism (21 percent). Reorganized in 1985 by a Toyota management team that gave workers greater discretion in production areas, the plant's quality shot up and absenteeism dropped to 2.5 percent.

Even steel has had its bright spots. In the midst of the crisis of the early 1980s, 8,000 employees of Weirton Steel bought their mill and have operated it successfully for nineteen quarters. The U.S.W. under progressive Canadian Lynn Williams (who succeeded McBride) now seeks board memberships and stock for steel workers, which is in part an effort to give workers more responsibility. Cushioned by a weaker dollar and by "voluntary restraint agreements" (which will expire in 1989), the industry is making profits again.

But it is a sadly shrunken industry, largely focused on specialty steels. It can no longer build a Golden Gate Bridge or a World Trade Center. It probably won't be involved in rebuilding oil fields and platforms wrecked in the Iran-Iraq war or in rehabilitating our sagging domestic infrastructure. Nor will it anchor a vast blue-collar middle class. An enormous labor of love, John Hoerr's book comprehensively chronicles a national tragedy. □

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BOOK NOTES.

JUDITH LONG

YOU MAY PLOW HERE: The Narrative of Sara Brooks. Edited by Thordis Simonsen. Simon & Schuster. 222 pp. \$6.95.

Sara Brooks got her house: "And I can sit down in peace because I can cook without going and gettin wood, and I can go to faucet and get me some water and get in the tub and take a bath." But Brooks's tale is less about achieving running water and electricity in Cleveland through determination ("I'm determined to do what you tell me I ain't") and inspiration ("my grandmother used to tell us 'if you fall, don't wallow'"); it is lyric psychosocial history. Recalling her childhood on her father's farm in the far backwoods of Alabama, Brooks, a black woman who has cleaned houses in Cleveland for more than forty years, tells of a way of life, now gone, and how roots in the South of almost seventy years ago led to "get your own, get your own, get your own" in the urban North.

The book is a pleasure to eye and ear. There are photographs, and the rhythms and turnings of Brooks's speech sing from the page—describing, *Foxfire*-like, hands at work in service to a plain life. Thordis Simonsen, the unseen hand that carefully photographed, tape-recorded, transcribed and edited the tale, has known Brooks since they were 4 and 37, respectively, and Brooks sang hymns while she worked in Simonsen's home. "I didn't know nothin," Brooks says of herself. "Not knowin nothin, born in the country, raised right in the country"—but her clear pictures of that country, her life, those times instruct us. We learn how it was to grow up poor, black and female to a life of hard work and simple pleasures.

"We used to really work. We used to work like mens." There was the cotton to plant, fertilize, hill, chop, hoe, defend from boll weevil and, in August, pick ("pickin cotton was the tiredest thing"). Meanwhile, there were the corn and cane, peanuts and potatoes, gardens and patches to be worked. Sister Rhoda "manned" the plow—"I couldn't get along with the mule. About an hour or so all the mule and me could do." If their crops were laid by, the children would hire out—"Hoe *all day long* for fifty cent," or a gallon of syrup or a tub of cracklins.

And there were chores. Fetch water.

The spring was in callin distance . . . go right by a sweet potato patch on one side, and that would be extending to the garden. . . . And then on one side of the privilege [privy] was a cotton field. . . . The trail go by there and then it come on by the cow pen, through the pasture, and get under a wire and come around across another field and right on down to the spring.

Wash the clothes at the spring on Saturday morning with a battling block ("a big block you saw when you be done cut down a big oak tree"), an oak paddle or an old wagon spoke and lye soap made from oak ashes.

You soap the clothes real good, and then you squeeze em and you put em on the battling block. We'd battle the clothes and turn em over and battle the clothes some more. You washin em when you battling em—battling, battling. Then you put em in a big black pot . . . and boil em. That was sterilizin em.

And sweep the yard and milk the cows and feed the hogs and sew and clean and iron (with four irons in the fireplace), then bathe on Saturday night in a tin tub with lye soap, a dried squash as a sponge and spring water (shared) heated on the stove.

Sometimes Brooks found time to roam the woods to search out turkey berries with her brother and sisters, hunt plants to cure headache, fever, worms or poison ivy, steal one of Mama's chickens to roast with dried corn in the woods, go fishing. Summer evenings the family might sit on the porch and sing.

You could hear our voices *goin way out* at night. And then when we'd sing so, some peoples over farther from us would hear us and they'd sing. The woods between us—and the streams between us—it'd be real pretty. . . . And we'd hear the frogs—they'd be "whoop-whoop, whoop-whoop" down there in the woods.

Jim Crow waited beyond the family fields. Although, as Brooks says, "we didn't come up hard like a lotta peoples did under the white peoples," racism was a part of life, like bad weather, best avoided by staying home. "My father told us 'You go into town, you tend to your own business, you turn right around and come back home.'" He warned, "Daught, you don't go around the white folks talkin—you just keep your mouth closed." And Brooks did, with difficulty, "because if I hadda said

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D846

somethin . . . he was goin to do the beatin."

Down at the depot the platform was segregated, and only whites could use the restroom ("you didn't have nowhere to go if you didn't go in the woods before you got there, you know"). The train had one coach for blacks; the overflow rode the baggage car. At one stop down the line no blacks got out: "The letters was in red up there on a board. 'Niggers read and run.'" At the time, Brooks says, "We didn't say nothin and we didn't question anything. Nope. We just went. But when we started thinkin, gettin older, then we'd ask each other, say, 'Wonder why?'"

But there was little time to wonder. At 18 Brooks married and left childhood and her father's farm for women's work: fieldwork, housework and having babies. The hoe and battling block were familiar; labor pains, new. The midwife administered dirt dauber tea—made from wasps' nests—to bring on labor; mother and child spent one month secluded in a darkened room, then

You take that baby and wrap it up and you go all the way around the house with that baby, and then you bring that baby back in the house. It's free to go then anywhere.

Brooks had to leave her babies. Fleeing her abusive husband, she was forced to venture into the larger world alone ("I'd go to bed every evenin before the sun go down and cry, cry, cry. . . . It was awful to leave my kids!"). For years Brooks did everything from "day's work" to factory jobs—the dirtiest work ("you'd have the heaviest and hardest job all the time—coloreds") at the lowest pay ("many a supper I've eaten nothin but peanuts and drink water") with no way up or out.

"I've had me a time!" Brooks declares of those years living in one grim rented room after another. "Honey, I was a moving sensation! I don't think Barnum and Bailey could move more than I did. . . . That's why I said I want me a house someday . . . and be free." In the comparatively prosperous and progressive North ("white women doin cafe work, and they doin custodial work and they work in plants in Cleveland. Those are the kinda things you didn't see down South") Brooks could support her children and buy her house at last.

But since I was here in Cleveland, I have dreamed about the peach trees out there in that field between the garden and the house . . . just so fulla fruit. . . . and I don't know why, but I didn't get a chance to get any of it. □

LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 706)

leadership delayed it. In our opinion, the current leadership's organizational approach, emphasizing endless surveys and local consultation, is a mask for timidity and indecision. This dissipation of union energies is at least partly due, we feel, to the influence of the N.W.U. executive director, who has said she sees the future "paying base" of the union as so-called commercial/practical/technical writers, i.e., those other than journalists and book writers.

Such disagreements over strategy are not surprising or unsavory in a young union. They are the stuff elections should be fought over. Claiborne trivializes the union's internal vitality by omitting the terms of the controversy.

John Dinges
National Executive Board member 1982-87
Organizing Vice President 1983-84.

Marc Cooper
N.E.B. 1985-87, Organizing
Vice President 1987 (resigned 1988)

Barbara Raskin
N.E.B. National Chair 1982-83

Frank Browning
N.E.B. 1982-86

Jeff Weinstein
O.C.N.W.U. organizer 1981-82, N.E.B.
1983-84 (Eastern Regional Vice President)

Connie Paige
Editor, The American Writer 1983-85
(N.W.U. newspaper), N.E.B. 1983-84

Ellen Schrecker
Chair, New York local 1984

Michael Balter
Los Angeles steering committee 1984-87

ANYTHING BUT THAT!

Brooklyn

I've been called some pretty horrible things in my time—from "Stalinist" to "liberal"—but Robert Claiborne has managed the ultimate insult. He called me an EDITOR!!! I AM NOT NOW, NOR HAVE I EVER BEEN, AN EDITOR. I am a WRITER. (In the interest of full disclosure, I am "series editor" for the National Women's Health Network/Pantheon book series—a cross between baseball scout and political commissar. No one who knows anything about publishing would confuse that with "editor"!)

In the interest of my reputation, I demand a retraction of this slanderous affront.

Andrea Eagan

P.S. Some of my best friends are editors.

CLAIBORNE REPLIES

New York City

Having myself been an EDITOR, both staff and freelance (also a "series editor"), it never occurred to me that the word could be

deemed "the ultimate insult"—or any kind of insult. But if my use of it distressed Eagan, I'm sorry.

As for the letter from Dinges et al., the first thing that must be said is that it is at least disingenuous. Its talk of "blatant partisanship," "puff for the new, glorious leadership" and so on clearly implies that I am a longtime buddy of Eagan's opponents who is pursuing a partisan feud.

In fact, as several of the signers know very well, my "partisanship" in the 1987 election was on Eagan's side. I was one of the minority of delegates that publicly backed her, and also gave money to her campaign; any suggestion to the contrary is disinformation. The article expressed my personal views, which aren't necessarily those of the union's present leaders—some of whom, in fact, questioned whether I ought to publish it.

After the election I chose to work with the new leadership, because my commitment was and is to the union and its members, not to any individual heading it. The alternative was to pick up my marbles and go home—as some of the letter's signers have done. The matter of the union's precise early membership is too peripheral to waste space over, beyond noting that I got the figures from what I considered reliable sources—including, as I recall, Dinges himself.

As for my criticism of the union's "organizational procedures," we're clearly talking about two different things. The original leadership indeed did a first-class job of setting up a formal organizational structure; where it fell short—through inexperience—was in informal organizational know-how, shown by what I called sketchy planning, blurred lines of authority and loose follow-up on decisions.

These criticisms were based on my personal observation of the union's operations on both the national and local levels—and my own fifty-odd years of organizational experience. I first voiced them months before the 1987 election; I also wrote Dinges at the time that I felt they applied to the entire national leadership—i.e., both the Eaganite and the anti-Eaganite groups.

The letter itself supplies a neat example of the sketchy planning I was talking about, when it criticizes the union's current book campaign for "endless . . . local consultation." In fact, the consultations have centered on setting up book-organizing committees at the local level. These were utterly essential for implementing the national campaign, yet were not even mentioned in the original organizing plan. They were also mandated at the 1987 convention by unanimous vote of the delegates—including several of the letter's signers.

The letter claims that the "real issue" in the 1987 election was the need to focus union organizing on its "original constituency of book writers and freelance journalists." I'd call this a non-issue, since that's precisely what we've been doing since the election: Most of our very modest organizing re-

sources have gone into the *Village Voice* campaign (freelance journalists) and the national book campaign (book writers).

Finally, the charge of "timidity and indecision" in the book campaign presumably applies to (among others) me, as one of its national heads. Well, as Eagan might say, I've been called a lot of horrible things in my time, but not "indecisive"—and certainly not "timid"! I and my colleagues in the campaign have been making all the haste we can, in the only way we can: slowly. Now, if we had a few tens of thousands in organizing funds. . . .

Robert Claiborne

RANGE WARS

Tucson, Ariz.

Having both lived in rural areas and been concerned about public lands ranching for many years, I strongly disagree with Wilbur Wood's "Holistic Cowboys on the Range" in the September 19 issue. Wood's article, rife with misinformation, reads like an advertisement for the grazing industry rather than an accurate portrayal of public lands ranching.

Wood starts out by scoffing at Bob Scott's Big Open proposal to transform a large portion of east-central Montana from fenced, overgrazed cattle country into a huge, unfenced game ranch and nature reserve. Despite Wood's immature, sarcastic remarks, Scott's proposal to remove livestock and reintroduce native animals for commercial use is quite realistic and workable.

Next, with violins, Wood defends the poor ol' dusty public lands rancher. (Actually, many, if not most, are wealthy and powerful.) Wood says the fee for grazing public lands went up 14 percent this year. He doesn't say this was the first fee increase in seven years and doesn't even begin to keep up with inflation. Or that the fee is still only about one-fifth what public forage is worth—the \$4 to \$14 per "animal unit month" ranchers should be paying. Who but a public lands rancher could feed a cow for only \$1.54 a month?

Wood doesn't seem to know his ecology or understand the environment. Thousands of times over the years, it has been shown conclusively that removing livestock from the land results in vast *permanent* improvement in vegetation, watersheds, soil and water quality and animal habitat, and that non-grazing almost invariably results in much greater environmental improvement than Allan Savory's "holistic resource management" style grazing.

Wood further states that wildlife benefits from public lands ranchers' private hay and stock tanks on public lands (usually paid for by the government, by the way). In reality, a lot more wildlife is shot by ranchers and harmed by the detrimental effects of their livestock than is helped by the small amount of private hay they eat. Maybe if the rangelands weren't so thoroughly stripped of forage, wildlife wouldn't be forced to raid private hay in the first place. Stock tanks

likewise do more damage than good to wild animals because they allow overgrazing in areas otherwise too dry for stock (though not for wildlife, which ranges much farther from water and uses less). Again, maybe if livestock hadn't destroyed so many natural water sources, many tanks wouldn't have been built in the first place.

As Wood says, there are no "bad" guys or "good" guys in this issue. I think most of us agree. Nevertheless, there are 23,000 ranchers spending tax money and degrading our public lands. Wood twists things around to obscure the true issue—welfare ranching and degradation of public lands. Diversionary tactics.

Wood suggests that if cattle and sheep are removed from public lands, "small towns will die," and it may even be "a form of genocide." This is totally absurd! Very few counties in the West derive more than 5 percent of their economic base from livestock grazing, public and private, even where 95 percent or more of their area is grazed. Most ranchers would not go out of business, anyway, if their cattle and sheep were removed from public lands.

Wood's statement that the land "needs people living on it day after day, not just admiring it on weekend outings" is even more ridiculous. The land did quite well without people for 4 billion years. Will the environment somehow fall apart without ranchers watching over it? Ranchers have done more damage to the West than any other land user, so why should we let them watch over it, anyway? And regardless of Wood's comment about weekend admirers, many stop-public-lands-grazing advocates do live out on the land in rural areas. Of course, due to social and political pressures and threats and violence by stockmen, they generally keep a low profile. I think Wood would be surprised to learn just how little support public lands ranchers actually have in rural areas.

As for Allan Savory and his H.R.M., there is not nearly enough room here to present the true story. But let me say I have attended a Savory seminar and workshop, read numerous articles on H.R.M., visited allotments where it is being practiced, talked to those practicing it and corresponded with Savory himself. In all the West, there is no solid evidence that H.R.M. results in significantly improved environmental quality, much less the grandiose improvements advertised by Savory. Those limited "successes" there have been under H.R.M. can be attributed more to greater outputs of energy, money, materials and just plain common sense than to any great scientific or managerial breakthrough.

Both economically and philosophically, Allan Savory has been prostituting science, and it's high time we called him on it. Savory is a range consultant, and more than 90 percent of his clients are ranchers who want one thing—increased profits from livestock grazing. Despite Savory's exuberant discourse on

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ecology, livestock remains his overwhelming priority. Indeed, ecological manipulation is merely his means to that end. It is becoming evident that Allan Savory would rather experiment on our public lands with his H.R.M. and livestock than support the one simple measure which would virtually guarantee much greater improvement in environmental quality—removal of livestock.

Lynn Jacobs

WOOD REPLIES

Roundup, Mont.

Removal of livestock does not guarantee that semiarid grasslands, public and private, in western North America will stop turning to desert.

Rest—from grazing, from animal impact, from fire, from plow and ax—is a tool. One of nature's tools. And (because for better or worse we are stewards) one of humanity's tools. Rest is not doing nothing. It is doing something. And it can be overdone in a brittle environment.

I invite Lynn Jacobs to come to Montana, where I will show him overrest and overgrazing in the same field, one plant overrested, the next overgrazed. I'll find a plant that has been both overgrazed and overrested, and I will show him.

Then we can continue the discussion.

I confess to being playful with my pre-horse culture Outward Bound campers who, for their final exam, spook a herd of bison over a cliff—but I do not scoff at the Big Open. The Big Open may blend economic with ecological sense. But first the Big Open must become real for the people who live here. Then, given that, given elk and bison (and wolves and human hunters?) replacing cattle and sheep (replacing pickups and barbed wire?), the question becomes: Do the predators (whoever they are) bunch and move their ungulate prey over the land to the land's benefit?

I defend no grazing regimes that degrade the land, and nowhere do I say that the grazing fee for livestock on public lands is too high. It is probably too low. Allan Savory has been heard to say—to a public lands rancher—that it is too low.

Oops! Those dreaded words, Allan Savory. Forget Allan, then. He puts many people off. His insights are important, not his personality. Come and see the land. I invite you to visit, Lynn Jacobs, and continue the discussion. We'll talk about why to stop deserts, and how, and how not to. Beneath that, we'll talk about what humanity can do, and not do, to help our biosphere—skin, lungs and blood—come clean and heal.

Wilbur Wood

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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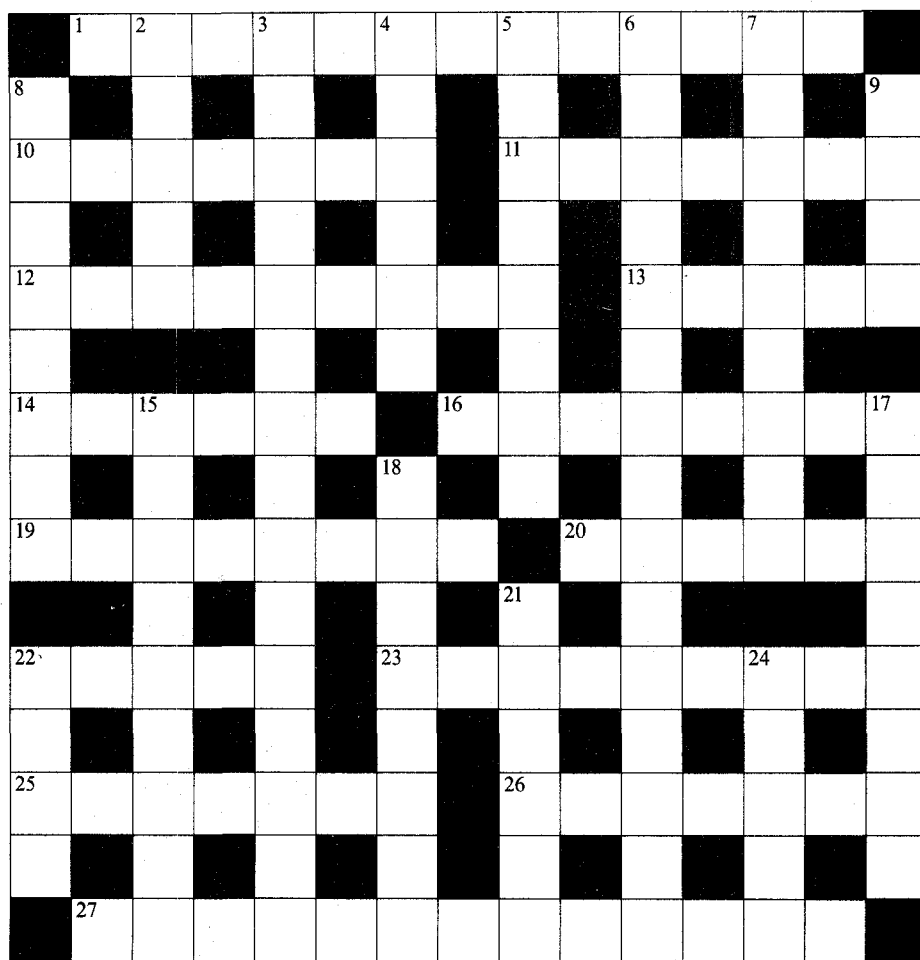
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Crossword Puzzle No. 2223

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 They used to, when they got burned—now cold water helps for those with poor holdings. (13)
- 10 Those who get a good one are not necessarily hit with a hammer. (7)
- 11 But "amor," even the wrong sort, could still prove something to beat! (7)
- 12 A quick way to get rid of the staff, to establish order in the army. (5,4)
- 13 Certain epics in translation could still provide hot stuff! (5)
- 14 One who might 22, as the auto builders might do in return, periodically. (6)
- 16 In all, a sty early displays what would be good for '87 in '88. (4,4)
- 19 The polite one at the entrance might say so, as the cops may be coming if you've done wrong. (5,3)
- 20 Such things haven't really been tried, but finding us in the nude, however wrong, might prove it! (6)
- 23 and 22 Might be associated with kleptomaniacs who "can't help it," but it has 12 possibilities. (9,5)
- 25 The 14 is almost bound to do so, but a point has no river to get rough. (7)
- 26 Some home equipment might be sent out this way, where the offending type might be put. (2,5)
- 27 It won't get you out of a ditch, but might have been responsible for quite a yarn at one time. (8,5)

DOWN

- 2 You have no right to do so, with us getting the Purple Heart, almost. (5)
- 3 What the prisoner might get in the light of interrogation, if it's close? (5-6,4)
- 4 Shifting gear, taking in what you have to do to recover. (6)
- 5 If you're looking for a catch, it may be this! (2,3,3)
- 6 The last word or so at court? (With bridge going down—as well as something you might make light of!) (4,3,3,5)
- 7 Chambers, unlimited, might give it. (9)
- 8 Something that frequently comes up with 22 down? (8)
- 9 and 17 Compounds in which there are unpaired electrons. (Those that might be red are loose.) (4,8)
- 15 One way to make pets appear this way marching to a different drummer? (3,2,4)
- 17 See 9
- 18 A young gymnast of a few years ago had a period of unconsciousness, but it possibly had a nice ending. (8)
- 21 Such a box might be safe. (6)
- 22 Sound rule, but its fall might be prayed for. (4)
- 24 The Cleveland, Atlanta and Washington teams should not belong to the same one, probably. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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What Somoza, Elliott Abrams, and the Contras didn't destroy, Hurricane Joan did.



Hurricane Joan slammed through Nicaragua with the unleashed fury of a hundred armies bent on violence and total destruction.

Even the numbers suggest the aftermath of an all out war... 116 dead. 110 missing. 178 seriously injured. Nearly 200,000 left homeless. Over 50,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Thirty key bridges wrecked beyond repair. Three major hospitals, ten health centers and nineteen medical clinics totally demolished.

The devastation inflicted by Hurricane Joan compounds the suffering of the Nicaraguan people, already hit hard by the U.S. trade blockade and Contra terrorists.

But the worst is still ahead — especially for women and children — as shortages of food, medicine, safe drinking water, shelter, and other basic necessities grow more urgent.

A malaria epidemic now

threatens to sweep through the countryside. With medical care disrupted and vaccines in short supply, an outbreak of disease will surely add to Hurricane Joan's deadly toll.

If it were another country, a natural disaster of this magnitude would automatically trigger a flood of relief aid from the United

States. But our government is on the side of those who are terrorizing the Nicaraguan people.

That means desperately needed emergency help — drugs to fight malaria, food, blankets, medical equipment — must come directly from the American people. Your tax-deductible contribution now will ensure an uninterrupted flow of life-saving disaster relief.

Nicaragua Medical Aid has already airlifted ten tons of emergency medical supplies purchased from UNICEF. Our special UNICEF discount enables us to buy \$10 worth of medicine for every dollar you contribute.

The Nicaraguan people have weathered ruthless dictators, official U.S. hostility, even Contra terrorism. With your help, they'll survive Hurricane Joan. Please send your most generous contribution today.

YES you can count on my support for emergency medical relief. My tax-deductible contribution will deliver ten times as much in badly-needed medical aid to the hurricane-ravaged people of Nicaragua. Enclosed is: ☐ \$25 (= \$250) ☐ \$50 (= \$500) ☐ \$100 (= \$1000) or \$_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
(Please make checks to Nicaragua Medical Aid/IAHF)

Bill my ☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard. Expires _____

Card # _____

Signature _____

Nicaragua Medical Aid
A Project of the Inter-American Health Foundation
1400 Shattuck Ave., Suite 7-125, Berkeley, CA 94709
(415) 841-1644

Help Nicaragua now.

Public Media Center